



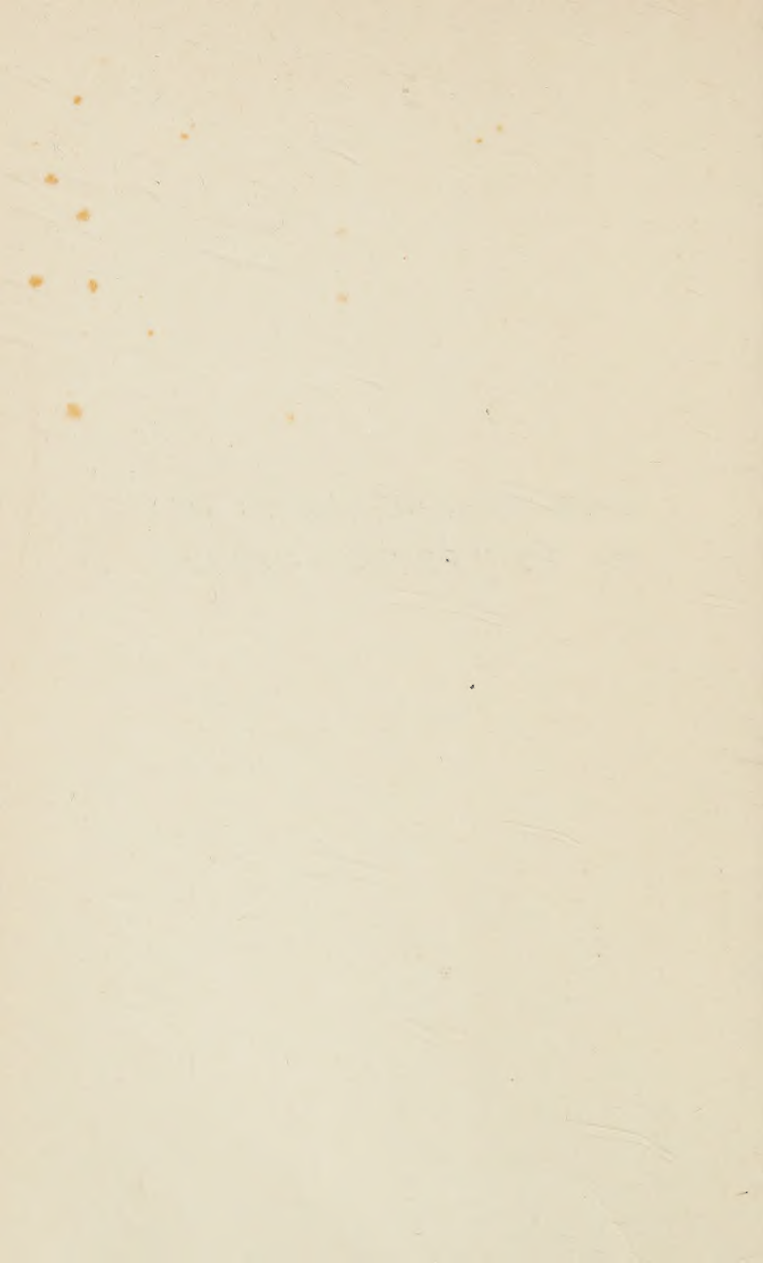








SOME REMINISCENCES OF  
AN UNCLERICAL CLERIC



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AN UNCLERICAL CLERIC

BY  
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To  
MABEL  
EVERARD  
AND  
STEPHEN



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# SOME REMINISCENCES OF AN UNCLERICAL CLERIC

## I

### A VICTORIAN BISHOP

**I** OUGHT to explain why I call myself "unclerical," if only to anticipate and disarm criticism.

Let me say, then, that since I took Holy Orders, forty years ago, I have been quite unable to adapt my own point of view to the conventional point of view of the Anglican Church and to conduct my life on conventional lines. As many men immeasurably my superiors in piety, learning and culture have been able to do so, I am quite prepared to admit that my failure is due to some inherent defect of character. Be this as it may, the fact remains that I am entirely out of sympathy with many of the activities of the Church of which I am a minister.

I never, if I can help it, attend Conferences, Congresses or clerical meetings of any kind. I dislike Missionary meetings; Temperance meetings are an abomination unto me; organizations like the Mothers' Union and

Girls' Friendly Society do not interest me as much as they ought to ; Bazaars, Sales of Work and other expedients for raising money do not excite my enthusiasm ; and all the cumbersome organization which has grown up during recent years, with its futile committees, fussy formalities and endless red tape, oppresses and wearies me. In short, I cannot throw myself into the common life of the Church, which is largely made up of these things, and, as far as I can see, of very little else. As I say, the cause may be, and probably is, due to some defect in myself, to self-conceit, idleness, worldliness, or lack of esprit de corps, but the fact remains, whatever may be the true explanation.

It has placed me in the ranks of those who are "despised and rejected" of Bishops ; on whom dignified Archdeacons look askance ; over whom eminently respectable Rural Deans shake their heads ; and from whom ecclesiastical laymen shrink with pious horror. So much about myself. I endorse in advance the severest things my critics may have to say about me, and trust my readers, if I have any, will not be shocked either at anything I tell them or at my manner of telling it.

James Atlay, Bishop of Hereford, gave me Holy Orders. He was a thorough-going Erastian who, like the Apostle St. Paul, was



“born out of due time;” for he ought to have lived in the eighteenth century instead of the nineteenth. I am sure, if he had been asked to formulate his religious views, he could have said with Thwackum in *Tom Jones*: “When I speak of Religion, I mean the Protestant Religion, and when I speak of the Protestant Religion I mean the religion of the Church of England as by law established.” Mr. Gladstone, I have heard, said that he was the only Bishop on the Bench who had not justified his appointment, but this I take leave to doubt. He was as good as most Bishops and better than some I have met. He certainly was not a man of “felicities and facilities.” He had the manners of a Drum-Major and was a bit of a martinet in the administration of his diocese. But when you got to know him you found, as people found with Bishop Temple, that he was really a kind-hearted, good man. And I am told that before he died he quite won his way into the hearts of his Clergy, who knew how to discount his curt speech and abrupt manners.

I shall never forget my first interview with him. I had been given a title in his diocese and wrote and asked for an appointment. He fixed the following Thursday “at noon *sharp*.” So at noon sharp, in fact as the clock was striking twelve, I was at the front door of the

Palace at Hereford. I sent in my card and presently the Bishop—a huge, burly Yorkshireman, standing over six feet—came stumping out, with my card in his hand.

“You said two o’clock,” he shouted at me—this was his only greeting.

“And you said noon sharp, my lord,” I replied handing him his letter.

“’Um, so I did,” he grunted. “Well, come at two. I can’t see you now.” And he turned his back on me and stumped off again.

So I came at two. He produced a big ledger.

“Name,” he snapped.

I told him.

“Where were you educated?”

This also I told him.

“Have you been confirmed?”

“Yes, and baptized,” I replied.

These and a few other particulars went down in the ledger. He then fumbled in his coat-tail pocket and found and produced a small Greek Testament, which he slammed down on the table, saying:

“Open it where you like, and go on.”

By a most extraordinary coincidence I opened it at the second chapter of the Epistle of St. James, the second verse of which begins, “If there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring and glorious apparel,” etc. I rendered χρυσοδακτύλιος “a gold-ringed man.” I noticed

just the ghost of a grim smile on the bishop's face.

"That's enough," he said, and back went the Greek Testament into the episcopal pocket. I believe he thought I was trying to have a joke at his expense. "Now, sir," he continued, "be pleased to tell me what was the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat?"

I gave the required information. So much for the Old Testament. He then turned to another subject.

"What is a sacrament, sir?"

I gave the answer in the Catechism.

"Can you turn that into Latin?"

I did.

"Which was instituted first, Baptism or the Eucharist?"

"Baptism," I answered.

"You're wrong," he said.

"So I am, my lord. I forgot."

"Then you shouldn't forget," he replied.

"Well, if there is nothing against your moral character, I am prepared to accept you. You will come here for my Chaplain's examination the week before Trinity, but that, of course, is a mere form! Good day."

In due course I presented myself for his Chaplain's examination. It was certainly very elementary, and I recollect that in the Old Testament paper the hardest question was:

“Write out, in order, a list of the Books of the Bible.”

I am most unwilling to do him an injustice, but I think that the Bishop regarded ordination as being on much the same level as the conferring of a University degree, and that it was only out of deference to the growing sentiment that the matter should be treated more seriously that he arranged to give his candidates three addresses on the three days preceding Trinity Sunday. Those addresses were quite unique. On the first occasion he kept us waiting nearly half an hour, and when he did arrive, after he had growled out an apology, he said :

“I hold in my hand a sermon by my brother, the Bishop of London, which so exactly expresses what I have on my mind that I will read it to you.”

On the next occasion he walked in with a volume of the Speaker's Commentary under his arm.

“Open your Greek Testaments,” he commanded, “at 2 Cor. iv. I will first read the Chapter through in the original Greek, and you will be pleased to follow me, and then I will read you some of these truly admirable notes.”

So that was that. On the last occasion he addressed us himself. He told us that what he had to say would be practical rather than spiritual. Addressing those who were to be admitted to the Diaconate, he said that,



although after next Sunday we should be entitled to wear clerical attire and to write "Rev." before our names, we should not really be clergymen until we were admitted to the Priesthood. I think he was wrong about this, but we will let it pass. Then he proceeded something in this fashion :

"I wish to give you what I believe to be sound advice, based on my experience of nearly fifty years in the ministry. In the first place, let me urge you always to pay your bills punctually and, what is equally important, be careful to file your receipts. There is much dishonesty in the world, and the Clergy are often the victims of it. In the second place, be careful to answer your letters promptly and to be punctual in keeping appointments. Nothing irritates the laity more than carelessness and slackness in these matters. And, in the third place, I would remind you that you must pay your fees to my secretary before you are ordained to-morrow. If you pay by cheque, make the cheque payable to him and cross it. Some of you may not know how to do this, so I will tell you. You draw two parallel lines across the face of the document and write the words 'And Co.' in between them. Now let us pray."

The Bishop was a very domesticated man and there seemed to be a number of children

about the Palace. You had to go through the dining-room to get to the Chapel, which, as far as I can recollect, opened out of it. One morning, as we were proceeding to Divine Worship, the Bishop greeted some of his numerous progeny who were playing round the Chapel door with the cheerful salutation, "Well, piggy-wiggies!" and then immediately commenced the Communion Service. This, thought I, is the modern "Use of Hereford."

He was quite good company and could be very entertaining. He related with considerable satisfaction how he had accidentally confirmed a curate in his diocese. The curate had come in late, with one female candidate. "Come up here and kneel down," commanded the Bishop in a stentorian voice. The candidate knelt down and the clergyman beside her (which is the usual custom), and the Bishop confirmed them both! He enjoyed a joke and liked to make them; sometimes they were a bit on the keen-edged side.

"Can you hear the preacher, my lord, from your throne in the Cathedral?" I ventured to ask.

"Very seldom," he answered, "and it's wonderful what I'm saved!"

His own preaching was very much like that of the eighteenth-century Divines, and he made a liberal use of the writings and sermons of others. "Will you pardon the preacher if

he makes a somewhat lengthy quotation from a sermon by that great scholar and theologian, and distinguished ornament of the University of Cambridge, Dr. Westcott ? ” Then for the next ten minutes he would give us Westcott, and, after a few words of his own, he would then give ten minutes of somebody else.

He was most hospitable. And he “ did ” the candidates “ well ” while they were his guests at the Palace. His port (which I fancy came out of his college cellar), although not up to the mark of the Patterne port, would, I am sure, have satisfied Dr. Middleton.

“ You young men are inclined to be nervous on occasions like this,” he said on the morning of the ordination. “ Let me recommend you to make a good breakfast.”

I could not do less than avail myself of this episcopal dispensation from the canonical fast, for which I am afraid some of my brethren will feel disposed to blame me. It may be some satisfaction to them to know that I had a bad attack of indigestion during the subsequent service and had to take a dose of bicarbonate of soda when it was over.

Bishop Atlay may not have been what is called “ a spiritually-minded ” man, but he had less humbug about him and more common sense than any Bishop I have ever met. Peace be to his ashes !

## RURAL CHRISTIANITY — A COUNTRY FUNERAL

“Where every prospect pleases,  
And only man is vile.”

SO wrote good Bishop Heber, with just a slight touch of the conscious superiority which holy men feel towards the poor benighted heathen. I am inclined to think that he was driven into writing this unfortunate line by the difficulty of finding a suitable rhyme for “isle,” with which the second line of the verse ends, as, from all I have heard, the Cingalese, to whom he was referring, are a simple, harmless and industrious set of people with nothing vile about them at all. The word might be applied with far more justice to a good many professing Christians in some of the rural districts of England, including those in the parish where I held my first curacy. To use a slang expression, the people there were about “the limit,” and in startling contrast to the beautiful country in which they lived.

Soon after my arrival the Vicar took me

round to introduce me to the parishioners. Among the first houses we visited was that of one of the biggest farmers. We found him lying on a heap of potato-sacks in one of the downstairs rooms, suffering from double pneumonia. The room was nearly bare of furniture and, although the weather was bitterly cold, there was no fire. The man was evidently in a serious condition, but did not seem to be aware of it. The Vicar suggested that he would be better in bed, and that it would be as well to light the fire and send for the doctor. But he only hugged his sacks closer round him and gasped out that he was all right and couldn't afford fires and doctors. A day or two afterwards he died, and in due course I received an elaborate card of invitation to attend the funeral of J. L. — Esq. I was much puzzled as to the identity of J. L. — Esq., but on inquiring of the village undertaker—who was also the grocer, wine merchant and draper—I found that it was my friend of the potato-sacks, who had left £500 “to be buried like a gentleman.” I also asked why I had been invited to be at the house at noon, when the funeral was not till four o'clock in the afternoon, and I was told that this was in order that the relatives and mourners might have plenty of time to partake of refreshments before the ceremony.

The Vicar and I were at the lych-gate at four o'clock, and there we waited—and waited. Five o'clock came, and there was no sign of the funeral. At half-past five we caught sight of the bearers, heading the funeral procession, at the foot of the hill leading up to the church. Their efforts to get the coffin up the hill recalled the labours of Sisyphus. How they finally accomplished it I don't quite know, but, after many attempts, they managed it somehow. When at last they reached the summit, they dropped their burden in the road and rolled into the inn adjoining the church, for further refreshment after their labours. The liberality of the deceased had provided for refreshment at every inn along the route. I shall never forget the pain and distress of my poor Vicar, who was a man of the most refined piety—a personal friend of Newman's, and one of the earlier Tractarians—a very fine old school which has now, alas, disappeared.

“What had I better do?” he asked.

“Bury him,” I replied. “If you put it off, they will be in a worse state to-morrow.”

So buried he was. There was considerable delay and difficulty in negotiating the church door coming in and going out, and an incident occurred which was indeed most painful and shocking, but to an unclerical person like myself



not without its humorous side. As we were going into the church, we noticed that one of the funeral party, a fine-looking old man of about seventy, was shedding copious tears. My Vicar whispered to me :

“ I am thankful to see they are not all brutes.”

I said I was thankful too.

The progress of the corpse from the church to the grave was like that of a schooner in an Atlantic storm, and just as we were committing the body to the ground, at the words “ dust to dust,” the weeping old gentleman gave a lurch forward and fell right on the top of the coffin, and he and it went to the bottom of the grave with a terrific flop ! It was an awful business getting him out, and when at last it was accomplished he was laid on the grass in a state of blissful insensibility, where he remained until four of his farm-hands came and carried him off on a pig form.

The sequel illustrates the difficulty of convincing some transgressors of the evil of their ways. The following Sunday the whole party were at church, wearing the usual “ trappings of woe,” which may still be seen in some remote country places. The hero of the grave incident was there, none the worse for his adventure, and looking as bright and rosy as a ribstone pippin. He paid particular

attention to the sermon, which was rather a scathing denunciation of the depravity shown at the funeral a few days before. Pointing a stern, admonitory forefinger at the old sinner, the preacher said :

“ There were the living and the dead in the grave together, and the man who was in the mortal sin of drunkenness was even a more pitiable object than the man in the coffin.”

The old man was seen to nod his head appreciatively at this remark, and seemed quite pleased with it. After the service, somebody asked how he liked “ the new passon’s sarmon.”

“ Eh,” he said, “ that weer a bootiful sarmon. I don’t think I ever heerd a better ! ”

We called on another farmer, whose wife was very ill.

“ How is your wife to-day ? ” asked the Vicar.

“ Bad, very bad,” was the reply. “ The Doctor says she can’t get better, and *I’m just going to stop his visits*. No good paying him if he can’t cure her.”

The Vicar suggested that the Doctor might be able to ease her pain.

“ Ah,” said the man, “ I never thought of that. She do keep me awake at night horrible.”

I called a day or two afterwards. She had died just before I arrived.

“ Well,” said the bereaved husband, “ you’ve

let the old woman slip through your fingers. She's gone. I'm off to the village to get some gin and whisky; a job like this one ought to have spirits in the house. It's a great nuisance losing her. I suppose I shall have to advertise for another." And off he went to procure the sedatives he needed to assuage his grief.

I would fain draw a veil over the sexual morality of the members of my flock. They had a code of their own which was not exactly in accordance with the usual Christian standards, or even up to the standard of the Cingalese on whom Bishop Heber is so severe.

"Your daughter," said the Vicar, to a woman we were visiting, "has had five illegitimate children, hasn't she?"

"No, seven, sir, *seven*," she replied, apparently quite hurt at this slight cast on her offspring's fertility.

The Vicar afterwards told me that he believed there wasn't a chaste household in the parish, and I don't think he was far wrong.

At the annual fair which was held in the autumn, the inhabitants—or the greater part of them—fairly let themselves go, and indulged their proclivities for drinking and fighting to the top of their bent. The village street at about eleven o'clock at night presented a spectacle which would require a more graphic

pen than mine to describe adequately. Those who were not lying dead-drunk in the gutter were fighting for all they were worth, and the oaths and shouts of the combatants and their backers rang through the night like a chorus of demons on a holiday from the lower regions. Of course all this happened nearly half a century ago, and the parish is a very different place now. It was a hundred years behind the times even in the eighties, and enabled anyone to form some idea of what "the good old days" were really like, over which people are sometimes inclined to be enthusiastic.

Apart from these irregularities they were not a bad set of people: fairly industrious, civil-spoken, and as honest as half-bred Welshmen could be expected to be. I think they broke my Vicar's heart and, although a scholarly, refined man of his type was about the last person in the world for such a place, yet he did a good work there and fought a hard fight with the most extraordinary courage and self-sacrifice. As he had plenty of money, I often wondered why he stayed there. But men of his stamp, having put their hand to the plough, seldom look back. So he ploughed his lonely furrow, being content, as he used to say, "to break up the fallow ground" and to leave others to sow the seed.

### III

#### SOME OF MY CONFRÈRES OF THE EARLY EIGHTIES

**G**OOD and faithful man as he was, my Vicar never reached the height of loving his flock. And if anyone is inclined to say that this is hardly surprising, considering what they were like, I can only reply that I think it is possible he might have done so if he had not allowed his head to interfere with his heart. His heart was right enough, but his head was full of theological dogmas which certainly restricted the free play of his better instincts. His conception of the Deity was entirely anthropomorphic. His God was a "magnified non-natural man," sitting on a Great White Throne, and I am tempted to add, as Professor Clifford once said of the God of popular Christianity, "not even a good man."

Among the pious opinions which he had elevated into doctrines of the Christian faith was the belief that he and his flock would stand at the last before God's judgment-seat, and that

he would have literally to give account for each one of them. This is a belief very commonly held, and I express no opinion as to its truth or falsity. There is a story told of a Curé who said to his flock, "At the last, God will ask me, 'What about the sheep I committed to your charge?' And I shall answer, 'The *sheep*? Why, I had no *sheep*—they were *pigs*!'" My Vicar might have urged the same plea. But this belief, whether true or not, certainly did not help him. On the contrary, it made him morbid, depressed, irritable, and at times, when things were going wrong, bitter and uncharitable. In some moods I really think he would have been inclined to agree with Tertullian that the contemplation of the tortures of the damned will form a not unimportant element in the bliss of the redeemed—which recalls Heine's celebrated saying that the height of happiness is to sit under your own vine and your own fig-tree, with your enemy hanging from the nearest post.

This was when he worked himself into a theological frenzy. But if he had seen the worst member of his flock in the lake "which burneth with fire and brimstone," he would, I am sure, as the American preacher put it, have been the very first to "organize a relief expedition." Men are usually better than their



theological beliefs. Had he just taken the people as they were (and with all their faults, there was something lovable about them), and not troubled his head so much about the Day of Judgment, I believe he could have done more with them.

Their sins, after all, were chiefly material—committed without any clear and definite consciousness of wrong doing. And, as an illustration of this, I may mention that my gardener, a very honest and hard-working man, was quite surprised when I told him that it was not right to celebrate the great festivals of the Church by getting drunk. He had done it for years, and seemed to think that everybody else did it, myself included.

But whatever he may have been as a theologian, as a man my Vicar was one of the most charming persons anyone would wish to meet. He was an old bachelor, and had rather run to seed through not having a wife to look after him. No wife would ever have allowed him to go about in clothes which were nothing more than moth-eaten rags. And I am sure she would have tidied up the Vicarage, particularly the dining-room, the like of which I don't suppose I shall see again. The side-board, the table, the chairs, the sofa, and in fact every article of furniture, were piled with



papers : Missionary Reports, magazines, pamphlets, newspapers, letters, bills, receipts, and goodness knows what besides—the accumulation of about twenty years which ordinary people commit to the waste-paper-basket. He knew the exact whereabouts of every document in this stupendous rubbish-heap, and if you asked for a particular letter or pamphlet he would dive his hand into the mass and instantly produce it. It was like a conjuring trick, and he was quite proud of his ability to perform it. If you wanted to put him in a good humour, you found some excuse for asking him to do it.

Nothing was allowed to be touched. When he gave a luncheon or dinner-party, the table was cleared and sufficient chairs for the guests, but nothing else. The vegetables, wine and other accessories were put on the floor. But, however unusual these arrangements might be, his dinners were beyond reproach. A dish of freshly-caught trout, the tenderest saddle of Clun Forest mutton, a raspberry tart such as only his cook knew how to make, and the most delightful savoury, was the kind of fare usually provided. While for wines, a Sauterne which I doubt whether you could get now at any house, and port, which put even the Bishop's excellent wine in the shade. For a liqueur you had *pre-Waterloo* brandy. Yes, his dinners

*were* good, and his company was even better. When he forgot the parish and his gloomy theological tenets and was simply himself he was absolutely charming. Not only did he diffuse the right mental atmosphere but he thoroughly understood the art of conversation, an art which very few people know anything about, which is the reason why social intercourse is often so trying. He had an apparently inexhaustible stock of stories which he told in the most perfect manner—the stage lost a great actor in him—and his general conversation was racy and clever, especially his criticisms of the leading men of the day.

He was not a great scholar, although he had held a fellowship at Oxford, but a very widely-read man, and what he had to say about Art, Literature and other subjects was always illuminating, and I have often wished I had written down some of the good things he said. When once he got you inside his house, such was his pressing hospitality that it was very difficult to get out of it again. He simply would not part with you : and you never wanted to go because you were never bored. On one or two occasions I went to luncheon with him at 1 p.m. and left at 1 a.m. ! and never had a dull moment the whole time.

It seemed almost a tragedy that a gifted man

like this should be buried in such an out-of-the-way place, but I never heard him complain of his lot or express any desire to change it. I often wondered whether he had any disappointment in his early life which caused him to retire from the world, but I fancy that, like Canon Ronder in *The Cathedral*, "his sense of humour prevented him from falling in love," and like his friend Newman, I believe he had rather a poor opinion of the opposite sex. I think, from remarks I have heard him make, he would have endorsed Newman's verdict that "women are dreadful liars."

How a man of his wide outlook on life and keen, sceptical intellect came to hold the theological views he did is a paradox I will not attempt to explain. Perhaps it was only a striking illustration of the general truth that the human mind "is a congenial nidus for inconsistent beliefs." After giving one of these entertainments, the theologian would again take possession of him and he would retire into his shell. And there would follow weeks of gloom and depression when he would scarcely speak to anybody and went about looking the picture of misery. I suspect that at the back of his mind was an idea that the enjoyment of the things of this life, however harmless and innocent, was, to say the least, dangerous, if

not absolutely sinful, and that his conscience reproached him for being too worldly in his conversation and—who knows?—a stumbling-block to a younger brother in the Ministry. But after a time the depression would pass off and I got another invitation to dinner.

A very different type of man was the Rector of the adjoining parish. I was introduced to him at the annual dinner of the Governors of the Hospital of the Holy and Undivided Trinity in Clun—about which I shall have something to say later on. He was a courtly, aristocratic, distinguished-looking old gentleman, dressed in the old-fashioned clerical style: that is to say, he wore a stock and white neck-cloth, a frilled shirt, low waistcoat, and cutaway coat. I felt rather overawed by his dignified appearance, but his greeting, if a little startling, put me quite at my ease.

“I am delighted to make your acquaintance,” he said, “but I fear that we meet in degenerate times. I have attended this dinner for over forty years, and can recall the days when we consumed more wine *before* dinner than we do now *at* and *after* dinner. Men can’t stand their liquor in these days, which shows that their heads are not as strong as they used to be, which is a sure sign of degeneracy. I hope you will be happy in your parish, which, you will

pardon my saying, is not a fit place for your Vicar, who is about as suitable for it as a race-horse is for a dung-cart."

Needless to say that after this we got along swimmingly and remained on very good terms during my residence in the neighbourhood.

My readers must not conclude from this specimen of his conversation that he was "a wine-bibber" and careless about his clerical duties. He was a survival of the times when it was the custom to consume a considerable quantity of wine at and after dinner, if not before, and when occasional excess in the use of what was lawful was only regarded as a venial sin; an opinion which is upheld by most moral theologians. He was devoted to his parishioners, about whom, however, he had no illusions.

"Have you in your parish a pious and God-fearing man you could nominate for the vacancy at the Hospital?" wrote my Vicar to him on one occasion.

"No," he replied, "there is not such a thing in the place."

He didn't add, as he well might have done, "and I am very glad of it." Not that he was an enemy to godliness, but he hated pretentious piety. I remember a somewhat unctuous Relieving Officer applying to the



Board of Guardians, of which the Rector was a member, for a fortnight's holiday. It was granted, and the officer, in thanking the Board, made a very effusive speech all about his work and the Christian spirit in which he tried to discharge his duties.

"I propose, gentlemen," he concluded, "to go for a short visit to Tenby with my wife and family."

"Oh, go to hell if you like!" broke in the Rector, irritated beyond endurance by all this canting humbug.

His language, I must confess, used to shock people when they first made his acquaintance. And it even shocked me the first time I heard him fairly let himself go. That was one day when he had the gout. And the way he expressed himself would have left an ordinary trooper a very poor second. He immediately apologized.

"Don't take any notice of that, young man; it's only my Welsh blood."

One had again to remember that he was a survival of the days when swearing was the custom among gentlemen, and was thought nothing of. He was a Prebendary of Hereford Cathedral and at some clerical gathering (a dinner, I think, as out clerical meetings usually took that form) the Bishop said to him :

“I suppose you will be coming to Hereford in a Sunday or two, to preach your annual sermon ?”

“No, my lord, I’ll be damned if I will,” was the reply.

The Bishop’s efforts to look shocked were not particularly successful. I fancy he knew his man.

When he was nearly eighty he had rather a serious illness—some internal obstruction—and they sent to Birmingham for a well-known specialist, whose name I cannot remember, to come and operate upon him. This specialist was most weird, not to say terrifying, in personal appearance, and when he entered the Rector’s bedroom with his case of instruments in his hand, he gave the old gentleman such a terrible shock that the obstruction removed itself and no operation was necessary ! After this illness his parishioners insisted on his having a curate. He hated curates (why he tolerated me I never could quite make out) and kicked hard against having one ; but had to give way. Of course he got rather an unfortunate specimen. A very worthy, good, earnest young man who had, or imagined he had, a great gift for preaching. The Sunday morning sermon had always to be adapted in length to suit the Rector’s dinner-hour, which was at one o’clock precisely. This the new curate had impressed upon him in a



rather startling fashion. The first time he preached in the morning, his subject was "Old Age," and he went on for about forty minutes. As the hands of the clock pointed to a quarter to one, he was saying :

"Yes, dear friends, the day will come when the strongest of you will have to walk with a stick ; and then, ah me ! he will have to take another stick——"

"And then," shouted the old Rector from his seat in the chancel, "he'll cut the sticks." And, waving down the preacher with his hand, he said, "And now to God the Father," etc.

I hope my readers will not think this old gentleman was a heathen, for such was not the case. He had not thrown off the habits and customs of a bygone time, but beneath all his oddities and surface faults was a singularly honest and benevolent heart, entirely free from spite and meanness. The best testimony to his real worth was the fact that his parishioners invariably sent for him when they were dying, and, as I happen to know, derived the greatest comfort from his ministrations. When he died, his flock sincerely mourned his loss.

There were a good many family livings in the diocese of Hereford, and not a few of the clergy took Holy Orders to be able to occupy them. It is doing them no injustice to say this, as they

themselves made no secret of it. They lived the life of an ordinary country gentleman : they hunted, shot, fished, acted as magistrates and Guardians, sometimes farmed their own glebes and were on the whole respectable and useful members of society. Their clerical duties, I must confess, sat rather lightly on them and were, as a rule, reduced to the minimum required by the King's ecclesiastical law. In many instances their families had lived for generations among the people to whom they ministered, and, partly on this account and partly because they did not set an inconveniently high standard of conduct, they were generally well liked and respected. I can hardly bring myself to believe that they gave much thought to the Day of Judgment, but they understood their people and did what they could for them in things temporal, without entirely overlooking things eternal, though these latter did not appear to occupy a very prominent place in their thoughts.

I remember once supping with three of them. It was on the occasion of a Harvest Festival. I think I was the preacher. We had had a long, hearty service, with many hymns, and my sermon might have been a bit long, certainly longer than I should preach now. Anyway, we were all very hungry when we retired to the Vicarage for supper. There was almost

a dead silence during the meal, broken only by the sound of the play of knives and forks and necessary requests for this or that in the way of food and drink. When at length it was over, one of them pushed back his chair, and, with a sigh of immense satisfaction, said to our host :

“ Well, Jones, you *have* given us a supper ! ”

There was a marked disproportion between my physical bulk and theirs, of which I could not help being acutely conscious. At that time I weighed about nine stone ; their united weight could not have been very much under sixty stone ! They were jolly, convivial souls and great pals. They dined at each other's houses in rotation three times a week, when they always contrived to enjoy themselves. Their united intellects produced the following couplet, of which they were immensely proud :

“ These three jolly dogs  
Together ne'er dine  
Without wanting a dose  
Of Pyretic Saline.”

But, whatever their shortcomings, they had no vice about them and a good deal more of the milk of human kindness than many eminent practitioners of the severer virtues.

#### IV

#### CLUN HOSPITAL

I HAVE been told that there is an account of the foundation of the Hospital at Clun in Froude's "History of England." For the last forty years I have been fully intending to find out for myself whether this is so or not, but not having a copy of the book in question and forgetting all about the matter on the few occasions when I could have consulted it, my intention, like many other good intentions, has not been fulfilled. I am indebted to the sub-Warden of the Hospital for the following particulars.

It was founded by Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, in 1614. He is supposed to have been closely connected with the poisoning of Sir Thomas Overbury a year or two before and to have founded this, and the similar hospitals at Greenwich and Castle Rising, in Norfolk—the latter for women only—as an act of reparation, on his death-bed. With this praiseworthy object he appropriated the tithes of four parishes, or, it may be, imposed new

tithes—I cannot find out which—and the Hospital of the Holy and Undivided Trinity in Clun was opened in 1618.

The original scheme provided for a resident Warden and “twelve poor men.” Each man has two rooms, partly furnished, a garden, three tons of coal, wood-firing and £2.14.0 a month, in addition to a good dinner on Sundays and Saints Days; he has also a doctor free of expense, and two nurses are provided to look after him if he is sick. In order to be eligible for membership the man must reside either in the Lordship of Clun or the Lordship of Bishop’s Castle, he must be a member of the Church of England, and, in my time, he was required to know the Church Catechism; he must be over fifty years of age, and a bachelor or a widower. In regard to this last qualification my worthy Vicar used to shake his head rather dubiously and say that he was afraid that in some cases it had been what theologians call “a proximate cause of sin.” I remember a married man asking to be nominated for the next vacancy.

“But,” objected the Vicar, “you have a wife living.”

“Oh, that’ll be all right,” the man replied.

And by a most extraordinary coincidence the very week the vacancy occurred his wife died. The Hospital is, I believe, managed by

Governors. Lord Powis is the Patron, and the Bishop of the diocese is Visitor.

The rules gave the inmates plenty of freedom. They had to be in an hour after sunset and to attend Divine Service in the parish church on Sundays, and prayers in the Chapel of the institution twice a day (at 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.) on weekdays. They grumbled a good deal at this latter requirement: they were not religious old men. I think the idea of the founder was to supply a home for broken-down tradesmen and farmers, but the inmates in my time were superannuated farm-labourers. As these "poor men" had never earned more than 10/- a week at the best of times, they found the unwonted luxury of their new position rather demoralizing. It was a case of "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked," and their conduct is a warning to Socialists and others against making people too secure and comfortable; for, however respectable they may have been in their working days, they rapidly developed some very bad qualities as soon as there was no necessity for them to exert themselves, and were, in fact, as disreputable a set of old blackguards as it is possible to imagine.

It was the Warden's duty to look after their morals, and a very hard task he had. One



saintly man who held the office tried to make them keep the rules and to abandon some of their grosser vices, and in return they made a bloodthirsty attempt on his life. I am not exaggerating. One of these infuriated old men chased him round the quadrangle with a carving-knife and would certainly have stabbed him, or cut his throat, if he had not managed to reach his quarters just in the nick of time. The Warden may not have been very tactful, and, like so many other holy men I have known, may possibly have been a little too hard on the frailties of the flesh : anyway, their hatred of him rose to such a pitch that they actually wrote and asked the Bishop of Hereford to come and inquire into his conduct, which they said was so "tyrannous" that their lives were a burden to them. I say "they wrote," but only one of them could write, and he scrawled his petition in pencil on half a sheet of dirty paper. Being Visitor, the Bishop could not refuse. So he came, and afterwards they deeply regretted that they had sent for him.

He arrived, in by no means the best of tempers, after a fourteen-mile drive on a bitterly cold winter's day. Atlay even in his most amiable moods was just a little bit alarming, but when he was put out it required some courage to tackle him. The look of



him was enough to terrify ordinary people. So, when he asked in his sternest tones what they had got to complain about, they were all so frightened that they couldn't speak. The result was that the Bishop sacked about a dozen of them, and this drastic proceeding had, at any rate for a time, a very sobering effect on those who remained. The ringleader was an old fellow named Gittens. He was the money-lender of the establishment, advancing small sums to his fellow-inmates and charging interest at the rate of about four hundred per cent. He was cute enough to see that the Warden's reforms might interfere with his financial profits, so he stirred up the others to rebel, taking care to keep out of danger himself.

"Thomas," I said to him, "how was it that when the Bishop came none of you had anything to say to him?"

"Well," he said, "he had no marcy in his eye, and the look of him made us all feel uncommonly bad in our bowels!"

Soon after this, the Warden died, and I don't think my Vicar was very far wrong when he stated, in the course of his sermon on the Sunday following the funeral, that they were responsible for his death. "You killed him," he said in tragic tones. A shudder went

through the rest of the congregation, but those to whom the words applied did not appear to be the least discomposed. They were what Americans would call a very tough proposition. Nothing short of physical torture would have had any effect on them.

One Christmas, when the Warden was away, ill in London, and there was nobody to keep an eye on them, they indulged in a drinking bout which lasted nearly a week. It was impossible to walk through the village without encountering an old man in a dark-blue cloak, with his tall hat cocked at a rakish angle, staggering along with a bottle of whisky under his arm and another bottle sticking out of his coat-pocket. On the Sunday after Christmas they all came to church, looking, I need scarcely say, exceedingly debauched and in that shaky and trembling condition which is the preliminary stage of delirium tremens. My Vicar's moral indignation was roused to boiling-point. He could scarcely restrain himself during the prayers, he was like a greyhound on a leash. He simply ran into the pulpit, and then let fly at them. As far as I can remember, he said that man committed sins in every stage of his life. There were the sins of youth—these were not so serious, because in youth we often had not much self-control and were

liable to be carried away by our passions. The sins of manhood were more serious, because they showed more deliberation. "And then," he exclaimed in stern tones, "there are the sins of old age." And leaning over the pulpit and drawing his finger along the line of old men sitting immediately beneath him, he added, "We have the disgusting spectacle of hoary-headed old sinners, men who are a disgrace to their religion and to the Institution to which they belong." He might have spared his denunciations, for all the effect they had on the culprits themselves. Most of them were asleep, or pretended to be asleep, and snored ostentatiously.

The old fellows used to be driven up to church on Sundays in a vehicle which was a cross between a prison van and a hearse. They complained that they were too infirm to walk, and so this conveyance was provided for them. It was curious how their infirmity dropped from them when there was a meet of the hounds; they could walk three or four miles to attend that, and with their blue gowns hitched up round their waists, they jumped ditches, scrambled through hedges, and raced over the fields like schoolboys!

I never could quite make out why the Charity Commissioners did not step in and sweep the

whole thing away, and apply the funds to more useful purposes. The sub-Warden tells me that about twenty-five years ago the scheme was revised, and I expect that the behaviour of the inmates of the Institution is now all that could be desired. The Warden is bound to be a Clerk in Holy Orders, and, like the pensioners, a single man, which reminds me of an amusing thing which happened shortly before I went to Clun. During the vacancy an old clergyman over seventy came to look at the place, and was delighted with it, as he well might be, for it is an ideal retreat for a man in his declining years. When it was offered to him, however, he declined it. He said he had lived seventy-four years without marrying, but he didn't know what he might want to do, and refused to bind himself !

Clun is well worth a visit. In my time it was not much known to the outside world, although some may have heard the famous rhyme :

“ Clungerford and Clunbury,  
Clunton and Clun,  
Are the quietest places  
Under the sun.”

I can't speak for the other three villages, but my Vicar used to suggest the following emendation as a more accurate description of them :

“ Are the most drunken places  
Under the sun.”

I am glad to hear that nowadays the inhabitants “are comparatively temperate.” The place itself is most interesting. There is a fine church, with some good specimens of the architecture of the transition period from Norman to Early English; the ruins of a border castle which, in the twelfth century, was frequently the scene of conflict between the Fitzalans, who held it, and their neighbours, and a most interesting mediæval bridge concerning which the local saying was that in crossing it, “You will get your wits sharpened.” In the neighbourhood, within easy reach of the little town, there are many places worth visiting, among them the Ancient British Camp on Bury Ditches and the famous Offa’s Dyke. In regard to the latter, the local tradition is that if a Welshman was found the wrong side of the dyke he was promptly hanged without the formality of an inquiry as to his reason for being there; that, it was taken for granted, must be of a predatory nature, and promptitude in despatching such trespassers was regarded as the best means of persuading the others to keep within bounds.

The local hotel is the *Buffalo*, where Sir

Walter Scott stayed when he wrote *The Betrothed*. He seemed to have occupied every bedroom in the establishment, for on one occasion, four visitors meeting at breakfast the morning after their arrival each exclaimed almost simultaneously, "I slept in Sir Walter Scott's room last night."

This shows that the worthy landlord acted on the same principle as the Roman Catholic Church does in regard to the veneration of relics.



## SOME MINISTERIAL EXPERIENCES

WHEN I was ordained there were two things I felt rather nervous about. The first was taking a baptism. I had never in my life held a baby in my arms, and I was afraid I should drop it, or hold it too tight, or mishandle it, or otherwise injure it. Of course the reality was not so alarming as I had anticipated.

My worst experience was in baptizing a child of four years old, who offered the most vigorous resistance to being admitted into the Church, and lay on the floor and kicked and yelled itself black in the face. I felt, and no doubt looked, extremely foolish, and matters were not improved by the presence of a number of giggling young women who seemed quite to enjoy the undignified position in which I was placed.

The other thing I felt nervous about was taking a wedding. The language of the marriage service is very outspoken and the



idea of reading the opening address, with its embarrassing allusions to delicate, or indelicate, subjects made me feel rather uncomfortable. This, no doubt, was nothing but youthful prudery, as I have frequently heard grave and learned divines maintain that this plain-speaking is most necessary and desirable, and I would not for a moment presume to question their judgment. There seems, however, to have been some ground for my feeling about the matter, as I notice that in the proposed revision of the Prayer Book the language of this Address has been considerably modified. I was also rather afraid that I might get into difficulties over what is known to theologians as the "matter" of the Sacrament; that I might, inadvertently, join the left hands of the parties instead of their right hands, or the man's right hand with the woman's left hand and vice versa, or direct the bridegroom to put the ring on the wrong finger, or make other mistakes which might affect the validity of the ceremony.

From which it may be gathered that I felt somewhat ill at ease when I took my first wedding. What happened during the service did not make me more comfortable. When I asked the bridegroom, a truculent-looking young man who was three parts drunk, "Wilt

thou have this woman to thy wedded wife ? ” he answered, in a manner which suggested that he had a very poor opinion of my intelligence, “ What be I here for ? ” This was decidedly awkward. And the answer to his question involved a good deal of explanation of elementary matters connected with the marriage service which, owing to his condition, he had some difficulty in grasping. However, with the help of his friends, who were most kind in giving me their assistance, the little difficulty was adjusted and the service proceeded. But when I asked him for the ring there was another hold-up. At first he wouldn’t give it to me. “ I bought that for my girl, not for you,” he said. So more explanations followed, which, owing to the muzzy state of his brain, had to be repeated several times.

Then, to my intense surprise, he suddenly unbuttoned his waistcoat. At first I thought he wanted to fight me for the ring, which would have been quite in accordance with the local custom of settling differences. But when he began fumbling about with both hands at the small of his back, I knew that this could not be the case. Then I thought that he might be suffering from some irritation—such as a flea-bite—in that particular part of his anatomy, and wanted to scratch himself ; but again I

was mistaken. What had happened was this : for greater security he had tied the ring to the back of his braces with a piece of string, and was trying to undo the knot ! He kept on tugging and picking for several minutes, swearing under his breath all the time. At last he pulled off his coat and waistcoat and handed them to his best man. Then off came his braces, and I began to be seriously alarmed as to what might happen next, but one of the bridesmaids, with admirable presence of mind, kindly held up his trousers, and with the aid of a pen-knife the ring was released. When he had resumed his clothing the service again proceeded, and concluded without any further mishaps.

I once nearly married a man to the wrong woman. It happened in this way. A party of three came to church for the wedding : the bridegroom, an elderly man of about sixty, a woman of about the same age, and quite a pretty girl of three or four and twenty. Being a very inexperienced young man, I thought that the girl was the bride, and put her on the man's left hand and began the service. I noticed that the bridegroom looked a bit puzzled, but as he wasn't quite sober I attributed that to his trying to pull himself together to go through the ceremony. The old woman, too, seemed rather uncomfortable, and a bit put out, but

I did not take much notice of her. I thought she was upset at the man's condition. When, however, I came to the question, "Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife?" I was enlightened, for he replied, "It bain't her," jerking his elbow at the girl, "it's t'other theer." I promptly put "t'other theer" in her right place and finished the service.

I met the bride a short time afterwards and asked how she was getting on.

"Eh," she said, "I do wish you *had* hitched him up to t'other."

The bridegroom, it appeared, was a widower with six children, and this silly old woman had married him out of pity. Before they had been married a week he began abusing her and knocking her about. Such is man's gratitude!

I had a still more remarkable experience when marrying a couple in Bermuda. The bridegroom was a private in the West India Regiment, a great, hefty fellow well over six feet high and, as is often the case with tall buildings, having the upper story very poorly furnished; the bride was a little fiery Jamaican negress who just about came up to his elbow. When we reached the espousals we came to a halt, and it really seemed likely that we should not be able to get any further.

"Repeat after me," I said to the bridegroom.

There was a dead silence.

“Repeat after me,” I said again.

He only glared at me as if he would eat me.

“Say what I say,” I said, trying another tack.

No good ; he continued to glare at me.

“You must say what I say,” I insisted.

Then in deep sepulchral tones he said :

“Say what I say.”

This seemed pretty hopeless, and I cast an appealing look at the bride. The little woman was quite equal to the situation ; seizing the bridegroom’s coat with both hands, she shook him violently.

“What he says you’ve got to say after him, you fool,” she hissed at him.

This appeared to clear his brain, and we got under weigh. He repeated after me :

“I, Abraham take thee Isabella,” etc.

But our troubles were not over. Having once started, he wouldn’t stop. When I began the bride’s espousal, “I, Isabella,” he went on in the same sepulchral voice, “I, Isabella.” This time the bride acted on her own initiative. She gave a jump into the air and caught him a violent smack in the mouth, saying :

“Shut up, you fool ! can’t you ? ”

Poor Abraham looked very indignant and bewildered, but he got his own back later on. I found out afterwards that this was not by



any means his first experience of the marriage service, and he really ought to have known better. He had several wives in different places in the West Indies, in fact he made a practice of getting married as often as he could. On the return journey to Jamaica, where there was another wife awaiting him, he solved his matrimonial difficulties by knocking Isabella on the head and throwing her into the sea.

It is not wise to joke about marriage with primitive people. I once had a "converted" Indian as a manservant. I never knew his age, and from his appearance he might have been any age between thirty and fifty; as a matter of fact, I think he was about thirty. One day I asked him if he was married.

"No, sar," he replied.

I said, quite in fun, "A young fellow like you ought to have a wife."

He made no comment on this at the time, but the next day he came to me with a very mysterious air and asked me to go into the garden, as he had something to show me. I went, and found a shrivelled, white-haired old Indian woman who must have been nearly eighty.

"What does this old woman want?" I inquired, thinking that she had come for charitable assistance of some kind.

"Me marry this woman, sar," he said.



“ Oh, no,” I objected, “ she won’t do at all. She’s old enough to be your grandmother.”

“ You say she won’t do, then ? ” he asked.

“ Of course she won’t do,” I said.

Then he turned to the woman and said in the most contemptuous manner, just as if he were speaking to a dog :

“ You get off.”

The poor old creature slunk away, and when I asked him why he wanted to marry an old hag like that, he answered : “ She have good savings, sar,” and then followed the somewhat sinister remark, “ She soon die, I see to that.”

He was an excellent servant, and as I have heard him alluded to at Missionary Meetings as a bright example of the softening influences of Christianity on the converted Indian, I probably misunderstood his point of view, which, however, appears to be one which is capable of being reconciled with the actual practice of a good many Christians.

In Bermuda the coloured people always arranged to be married at the season of the year when eggs were cheapest, in order to save expense on the wedding cake and other things provided for the wedding breakfast. Their weddings were the smartest functions at which I have officiated. The bride always wore a white silk gown made in the latest fashion ;

her hair, or wool, was done in the style which prevailed at the time and adorned with the orthodox wreath of orange-blossoms. She was attended by magnificently-attired bridesmaids holding expensive bouquets. The bridegroom, in frock-coat, tall hat, white waistcoat and white spats, looked as if he had walked straight out of Bond Street. There were carriages and pairs in abundance, and everything else suitable to the occasion. They either spent all they had on this display, or, if they could get credit, got into debt for the rest of their natural lives. The coloured man has a light touch on life, and I have met nobody who acts more consistently on the principle, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." After one of these matrimonial outbreaks it was no uncommon thing for the bridegroom to come to me the next day to borrow a shilling to buy some dinner!

I once went to one of their wedding feasts. It was a very grand affair, with everything to eat and drink that the place could supply and money could secure. The health of the young couple was proposed by an old negro who informed the company that when he saw the bride and bridegroom walking down the aisle looking so loving and happy, he was "fairly ruptured!" They were extraordinary

people, and liked to take their pleasure in good, deep, satisfying draughts.

For example, on their annual Club Day, they began soon after eight in the morning and usually finished at four o'clock the next morning.

But to go back to our own country. I have often been tempted to think that there is not much more than inherited custom in the religion of the people in our rural districts. They seem to have little or no capacity for religious ideas, and their notions of the Deity and His dealings with them are, to say the least, peculiar. I remember one old man who seemed to think that God was responsible to *him* for His behaviour, not that he was responsible to God. He was quite a good old man, honest, sober, industrious, and a most regular attendant at church, and I am quite sure he meant no irreverence. I met him one Christmas-time and asked him how he had been getting on. He said, very well. Mr. So-and-so had given him some blankets, Miss So-and-so a warm cloak, somebody else half a ton of coal, and so on.

"Well, William," I said, wishing to improve the occasion, "God has been very good to you, hasn't He?"

"Well, sir," he replied, "if He goes on as He's been a-doing during the last week or two I shan't have no fault to find with He!"

Another old chap I knew would accept no half-measures from the Almighty. The roof of his cottage was blown off in a gale, and the Squire offered to pay half the expense of replacing it. But the old fellow would have none of it.

"If Providence be going to give me a new roof, then Providence must pay for all of it," he said, and from this position he would not budge.

It is very difficult for an outsider to understand the mentality of the labouring classes. They have their own way of looking at things, and their point of view sometimes gives one rather a shock. I once had to break the news of his son's death to a farm-labourer. The young fellow was a sailor and had been drowned the previous day. I found the father digging in his garden.

"I am afraid I have some bad news for you," I said.

"What be that, sir?" he asked.

"I have just had a telegram, asking me to tell you that your son William was drowned yesterday," I said, thinking it best to go straight to the point.

"There now!" he said. "And we haven't paid his insurance. Do you think they'll let us have the money?" And then he went on with his digging as if nothing had happened.

I suppose narrow means and harsh social conditions tend to deaden feeling and sentiment. And yet the labouring classes seem fond of their children. This old man was quite overcome at the funeral. It is the same when they are seriously ill, or dying, they seem unable to think of anything, but just the need of the moment.

“ You will soon be in the presence of God, John,” I said to an old man, after talking to him about death and what comes after death.

“ Eh, eh,” he said. “ Could you let me have another bottle of port wine ? ” And this was the only remark he made.

What he thought of the serious subjects I had been talking about, or whether he gave them any thought at all, God only knows.

In regard to morality the working classes are very much the same as the rest of the community. Most of them lead chaste lives and others seem to have no morality at all. It is I think largely a matter of temperament, breed, and upbringing. I remember in one parish where I was Rector, a girl returning home from service, for a holiday, with very fine clothes and more money than she could have earned in her situation.

“ Your daughter seems very prosperous,” I said to her father. “ I suppose she gets good wages ? ”

“Yes,” he said, “she earns good money, but I rather suspect she’s been a-doing a bit of harloting, and that be a very paying job they tell me.”

Apparently he saw nothing objectionable in this way of obtaining money, and I am afraid that my remonstrances on the subject did not make much impression upon him. The common opinion in the rural districts seems to be that, if a girl goes wrong, it is more of a misfortune than a fault, and that a substantial cash payment puts everything right. I had an instance of this not long ago. I was talking to a woman about her daughter, and deploring the fact that she had had a child by a married man.

“Well,” said the woman. “he’s given her £50.” And she seemed to think that there was nothing else to be said on the matter.

Soon after the child was born she dressed her daughter in her best clothes and brought her to church. This was a kind of reinstatement in the position from which she had fallen, and was accepted by the neighbours as such, for they afterwards treated the girl just as if nothing had happened. The general opinion seems to be that it is better and more desirable to keep straight, but if a girl does go astray it is no good making too much fuss about it.



## VI

### SERMONS AND KINDRED TOPICS

“**I** HAVE addressed my people two thousand, four hundred and sixty-seven times since I have been in my parish,” complacently observed a worthy clergyman at a dinner at which I was present.

He was the type of cleric which the Church of England produces in large numbers. He was eminently respectable, moderately pious, perfectly orthodox, a prominent member of various diocesan organizations; he possessed private means, and had the Oxford manner; and I am compelled to add, although I have not the least wish to depreciate such an exemplary and highly-esteemed ornament of my profession, he was—well, just a little pompous, and as heavy as lead and as dull as ditchwater.

“Yes,” he repeated, sipping his port (he always allowed himself *one* glass as he was careful to tell everybody), “two thousand, four hundred and sixty-seven times have I spoken from my pulpit.”

An irreverent undergraduate who was present,

hardly realizing, I suppose, what he was saying, blurted out :

“ Good heavens, how sick they must be of you ! ”

Whether his “ people ” were sick of him or not I cannot say. Country people have a strange liking for sermons, however dull they may be, and they do not seem to mind how often a sermon is repeated. As somebody—George Eliot I think—has said, “ A sermon is heard with more satisfaction because it has been heard for the twentieth time ; for to the rural mind it is repetition, not novelty, that produces the strongest effect ; and phrases, like tunes, are a long time making themselves at home in the brain.” So this ill-mannered young cub may have been wrong after all. Most village congregations would feel that they had not had a proper service if the sermon were omitted. It is part of their inherited religious customs, any departure from which upsets and distresses them.

Whether there is much more in it than this I am inclined to doubt. They often appear to listen to a sermon, but appearances in this as in other matters are deceptive. I remember a farmer who always seemed to follow most attentively what I was saying ; in fact, he never took his eyes off me while I was preaching.

Speaking to him one day on some religious question, I forget what it was, which was exciting a good deal of interest, I remarked :

“ Well, you know what I said about it last Sunday.”

“ Oh,” he said, “ I don’t. To tell the truth, I always do my accounts and plan out my week’s work while you are preaching.”

I have often wondered how many members of a congregation do very much the same thing. Women, for instance, sit and gaze at the preacher as if they were entranced, and all the time they are thinking about their clothes, household affairs, or the last bit of scandal ; they have told me so. Others have told me that they can’t fix their attention for more than a few minutes, and after that their minds begin to wander ; others still adhere to the time-honoured practice of going to sleep during the sermon, and they must regret the disappearance of the old-fashioned square pews which were so admirably adapted for the purpose. Others listen, but only in order to catch hold of anything they can turn into ridicule when they come out of church. That country people can endure hearing the same voice Sunday after Sunday and listening to the same old platitudes (for preachers cannot help repeating themselves) shows what a strong

grip custom has upon them, as, indeed, it has upon all of us, although we may not be aware of it or prepared to admit it.

Something like twenty-four thousand sermons are delivered every Sunday from the pulpits of the Church of England, and, as far as it is possible to judge by outward evidence, this tremendous outburst of religious oratory has no appreciable effect on those who listen to it. Whether the fault lies in the preachers or in the hearers it is impossible to say. Very likely both are to blame : the preachers for their lack of fervour and the hearers for their lack of faith.

Preachers, like poets, are born and not made. Natural gifts, as everybody knows, can be improved by training and cultivation, and at the theological college where I went after leaving Cambridge, they did their best to develop any latent gift for preaching which the students might possess. We had lectures on the subject, we had to write sermons and submit them to the tutor, and at least once a term each student had to preach before the other students, the tutor, the Chancellor of the Cathedral and usually some other dignitary, in one of the churches in the town. After the sermon all retired to the vestry, and each in turn criticized the discourse that had been delivered. I fancy that this idea was borrowed

from the Jesuits. And I have been told that the reason why the Jesuits are so humble-minded and free from self-assertion is that during their novitiate they are subject to constant criticism from their superiors, which is so scathing and severe that all their self-conceit, if they ever had any, is entirely eradicated.

The criticism at these preachings was certainly not calculated to make any young man "think more highly of himself than he ought to think." If the preacher happened to be disliked, he heard a few home truths which probably did him good ; but after a time such nasty things were said and so much ill-feeling and resentment provoked, that, by mutual agreement, it was decided to leave all criticism to the authorities. Some of these sermons were priceless. I am sure that nothing like them was ever heard from a Church of England pulpit, or, I should imagine, from the pulpit of any other religious body.

I recall one that was preached by a youth whose relatives intended him for a family living if he could only surmount the rather formidable obstacle of getting any Bishop to ordain him. He was one of those harmless, brainless, idle young men who are a constant trial to those responsible for finding them a career in life. Clergymen who take pupils usually have one or

two men of this kind on their hands ; in the end they find their way to the Colonies, where they pick up a precarious livelihood by some form of unskilled manual labour, which is indeed all they seem fit for. This particular youth had been up at Oxford for about four years and, in his more expansive moments, he would tell you how once he nearly got through Smalls. I shouldn't like to say how many tries he had, but at last he had to give it up, or the authorities gave him up, and he entered this Theological College.

I looked forward with considerable interest to hearing him preach. I felt sure we should be treated to something quite out of the common, and my anticipations were not by any means wrong. He dropped into my room the night before with some sheets of foolscap in his hand.

"Do me a favour," he said.

"Yes, if I can," I replied. "What do you want?"

"Well," he said, "I've got to preach to-morrow and I'm completely stuck. I've copied out a bit from *Trench on the Parables* and have filled two pages, but it is such a grind that I can't do any more. Would you mind writing a page or two for me? Write any mortal thing you like, it doesn't matter what."

I wrote two pages as requested. He then



went to somebody else and got two more pages written, and so on until he had filled ten or twelve half-sheets of sermon paper. Having thus compiled his discourse, he tossed it aside without even taking the trouble to read it through. Next day he ascended the pulpit and delivered it. Commencing with the parable of the Sower, it abruptly broke off into a dissertation on the essentials of ordination, and then turned from that to denounce in unmeasured terms the iniquity of pew-rents; leaving this topic it soared heavenwards to descant on the ministry of the angels, and then suddenly came down to earth again and dealt with the question of the maintenance of the Clergy. Abandoning this, it proceeded to discuss the *filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed and ended with an impassioned appeal for support of the Universities Mission to Central Africa.

Like the Rev. Bute Crawley, he read it through "in his best voice without understanding a single word of it," and did not betray the least surprise or embarrassment at its sudden and extraordinary transitions. I have rarely heard a more interesting sermon. The learned Chancellor said that it was a striking discourse, though he could not "trace the connection of thought"! It may interest my readers to know that this young man did

not find any Bishop sufficiently easy-going to give him Holy Orders.

I once heard somebody say that the clerical profession is the last refuge of the incompetent. Be this as it may, I must admit that I have met not a few men who only discovered their vocation for Holy Orders after they had failed in business or one or other of the professions. Among them a man who was with me at the Theological College who, having made an unsuccessful venture as a hatter, turned his thoughts to the Ministry. He was a man of negative virtues and a highly nervous temperament; when he spoke to you he gasped and shivered just as if he had been suddenly immersed in icy-cold water; his mental equipment was a minus quantity, and I was exceedingly curious to see what would happen when his turn came to preach a sermon.

He, too, visited me the night before. He was in a painful state of trepidation and could scarcely speak. He managed to make me understand that, mistrusting his ability to prepare a suitable sermon, he had copied out the greater part of the article on the Day of Atonement in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, but that he was afraid the Authorities would know where he had borrowed from and that he might get into trouble. But there was not the

least risk of detection. All that could be heard between his gasps and his shivers was the statement, which ran like a refrain through the whole discourse, that "T-t-t-t-h-e-n-n t-t-h-e h-h-h-i-g-h p-p-p-r-i-e-s-t w-w-w-e-n-t- in a-a-a-g-a-i-n and *cut up another bullock*"—the last three words coming out with a rush and being uttered in a high falsetto voice.

Another man was a powerful extempore preacher with a voice like a street-hawker. He gave us a sermon on the Devil. Completely carried away by his subject and entirely oblivious of his surroundings, he leaned over the pulpit and shook his fist at the unfortunate Chancellor, who was sitting just beneath him, and exclaimed in stentorian tones, "Satan, I defy you!" The Chancellor edged away in order to get out of range, but the preacher followed him up, shouting contemptuously, "Satan, I despise you, I scorn you; vile reptile that you are, you flee from those who resist you." The Chancellor made a bolt to the extreme end of the pew, as far from the pulpit as he could get, but the preacher continued to hurl scorn and defiance at him until he closed his discourse with the words, "Thanks be to God Who giveth us the Victory!"

I thought it very nice of the Chancellor to say that we had been given a "graphic and

realistic description of the Christian conflict." It was certainly that, and I think we all thoroughly enjoyed it. I know I did.

One of the most curious pulpit performances, if I may use the expression, I ever listened to was that of a man I worked with in Lancashire. He was one of the best, but he had some queer ways, which his friends sometimes found rather trying, but more often amusing. He was very musical and his sensitive ear was continually jarred by the singing of the congregation and their way of joining in the responses. So one Sunday he went into the pulpit and, having said the Invocation, he expressed the hope that he might without any impropriety invoke the blessing of the Almighty on what he was about to do. He then went on to explain that instead of giving them a sermon he intended to point out certain defects in their rendering of the musical part of the service, with the hope that, for the greater glory of God, they would try and correct them.

"Now," he said, "let us run through some of the hymns. Take the hymn we have just sung, 'There is a Land of pure delight.' If the organist will kindly accompany me, I will show you how you sing it, and then I will show you how it ought to be sung." He then sang it all out of time and tune, with a strong

Lancashire accent, emphasizing the particular points in which the people went wrong, and then he sang it (he had a beautiful voice) as it ought to be sung. And so he went through the hymn-book, and afterwards treated the responses in a similar manner. I have heard many music-hall turns which were certainly less entertaining.

People often grumble at sermons and no doubt with good cause, but they forget that there is a preacher's point of view, which I heard very well put by a distinguished divine—now, alas, no more—who was one of the foremost preachers of his day. He was a man of considerable intellectual power and rather a “character.” In appearance he resembled Tenniel's picture of the Mock Turtle in *Alice in Wonderland*. Eloquence, as we know, is in the audience, and he hated preaching to stupid people. On this particular occasion he had to preach to a very ordinary and rather bourgeois congregation. He ascended the pulpit with a most melancholy expression of countenance, and, with one “flapper” (I will not say hand) hanging listlessly over the side, commenced as follows :

“No doubt you think it a great bore to have to listen to my preaching, but you wouldn't believe what a bore it is to have to preach to you !”

A good many clergymen feel like that. It is very difficult to address exactly the same



people Sunday after Sunday without feeling at times a trifle bored, especially when you know their spiritual and intellectual limitations, and that the best you have in you would be wasted on them. In my young days it was a common practice for the clergy to buy their sermons. One well-known sporting parson in Buckinghamshire used to get his by post with *Bell's Life*, every Sunday morning just before service. He would frequently tear off the wrapper in the pulpit. One day an old woman said to him :

“That was a good sermon you gave us this morning, sir.”

“So it ought to have been,” he replied. “I paid a half-crown for it.”

To conscientious clergymen who do not buy or borrow, the production of two weekly sermons is often a great difficulty. I knew an old man who had the most ingenious plan of economizing his output. He would preach a sermon in the morning with his false teeth in. In the afternoon he would alter the text and preach the same sermon without his false teeth. As, under these conditions, it was impossible to make out a word he said, he managed by this device to spare himself the labour of preparing a second discourse.

There is no doubt that country people prefer



unwritten to written sermons. But facility of speech is a rather dangerous gift, and unwritten sermons, unless carefully prepared, are nearly always very poor stuff. I will close this chapter by a story on the subject, which I am afraid is a chestnut but which will bear repeating. When Temple was Bishop of Exeter, it was his practice, when he had a Sunday free, to drop into some country church for morning service. On one occasion the clergyman of a parish near Exeter saw the Bishop engaged in his devotions at the bottom of the church, and pranced and danced down on tiptoe and hovered round him until he had finished his prayers. He then said :

“ Will your lordship preach this morning ? ”

“ No,” growled Temple.

“ I shall feel very nervous preaching before you,” pleaded the clergyman.

“ I can’t help that,” answered the Bishop. “ You must do your duty.”

“ I feel I ought to explain to your lordship that I have made a vow always to preach extempore.”

“ Oh, have you ? ” said Temple.

Well, whether from nervousness or from some other cause, this unhappy clergyman made a bigger ass of himself than usual. After the service, a grim, black head was thrust through the vestry door and a harsh, grating voice exclaimed : “ I absolve you from your vow ! ”

## VII

### BERMUDA AND THE BERMUDIANS

**A**S a good many people seem ignorant of the whereabouts of Bermuda, it may be as well for me to state that it is the largest of a group of islands known as "The Bermudas," situated in the North Atlantic, opposite Cape Hatteras, about three hundred miles from the east coast of America, and about seven hundred and fifty miles from New York. Most of these islands, which are of coral formation, are very small, some being only a few square yards in size.

Bermuda is nineteen miles long and a mile and a half broad. It is covered with cedar trees; dotted with picturesque houses built of blocks of coral specially treated for the purpose; traversed by white roads of the same material; and, when the oleanders, geraniums, roses, lilies and other flowers are in bloom, it is like a beautiful garden set in a sea of cobalt-blue under a sky which is all the colours of the rainbow. The climate except during the hot months, is delightful

and extremely healthy. There are two towns, Hamilton, with a population of about four thousand, which is the capital; and St. Georges, the old capital, which, when I was there, was falling rather into decay, but may have revived in recent years.

Bermuda is a naval and military station and used to be called the Gibraltar of the North Atlantic. At Ireland Island, which is connected by a bridge with the main island, there is a naval dockyard with a floating dock, at one time the largest in the world, though, I believe, there are now larger ones elsewhere. Bermuda was colonized from Virginia at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The population, apart from the Army and Navy, consists of about four thousand white people, and twelve to thirteen thousand coloured people, for the most part descendants of the slaves who came with the original colonists. Some of the white Bermudians are descended from old English families who were among the first "adventurers" who settled in Virginia. Although a bit faded, they have retained a good deal of the dignity of their Virginian ancestors and anyone coming to the island, bringing letters of introduction, will find them most kind and hospitable.

It is however, better to meet Bermudians

as passing acquaintances than to live among them. An Englishman soon discovers that their ways are not his ways nor their thoughts his thoughts. In the first place, they have a good deal of the old Virginian pride about them, and this, as everybody knows, sometimes amounted almost to insanity; in the second place, being descended from a race of slave-owners, they are inclined to be arbitrary and despotic; in the third place, they have a decidedly lawless strain in their blood, derived from ancestors who, if the truth must be told, were very often engaged in piracy and smuggling; in the fourth place, being islanders and having intermarried for several generations, they are very independent and exceedingly clannish; and in the fifth place, as the complex of these various tendencies, they are as stubborn as mules and as hard as rocks. Their intercourse with the United States has developed some of the more undesirable of these traits and has certainly not improved their sense of honour. They were never very loyal to the Mother Country, and many of them would like nothing better than to break away from her altogether.

“Bermuda for the Bermudians” is their slogan. They resent outside interference, though they have to submit to it in their

dealings with the Home Government ; and their great desire is to manage their own affairs in their own way. They have their own views of moral questions. Their inherited opinions and customs are their ultimate standard of right and wrong. If an aristocrat is one who does just as he pleases, regardless of what other people may say or think, Bermudians are aristocrats of the first water. Unless they have their own way nothing can be done with them. And within the borders of their island their position is practically impregnable.

An example of this occurred while I was there. At the dockyard there was a good deal of speculation going on which was very profitable to some of the island traders, who bought what was offered to them, "asking no questions." I wish I could add, "for conscience' sake." Nothing much was done to stop it and at last, things got so bad that when the port guard ship was refitted, some of the new fittings were, a few weeks afterwards, exposed for sale at one of the shops in Front Street, Hamilton. The captain of the dockyard prosecuted these people for receiving stolen goods. When the case came on at the assizes, the Chief Justice directed the grand jury (composed of Bermuda merchants and tradesmen) to return a true bill. Notwithstanding

this direction they promptly threw it out. One of them said afterwards, that it would "never do to allow business to be interfered with like that!" The action of the grand jury met with the general approval of the inhabitants.

Transactions of this kind were sanctioned by immemorial custom of the island, and the people could see nothing wrong in them. I remember when a steamer was wrecked off the island, how indignant some of the people were with the Receiver General because he would not allow them to loot it; their inherited instincts revolted against this piece of official tyranny. The government officials had a good many strange stories to tell of their ingenious attempts to evade the law and the difficulty of preventing them.

It was not only in civil affairs that they claimed the right to do just as they liked, but also in ecclesiastical affairs. Before 1879 the island benefices were in the patronage of the Governor. One of the Governors gave a benefice to a man whom the Bermudians did not like. There was nothing against the man: he was of unblemished character, a good scholar, and quite capable of performing the duties of his office. All that could be said against him was that he was a little odd and eccentric in



some of his ways. Among other things, he was very short-sighted and this sometimes led to his making unfortunate mistakes.

For example, when out for a walk he would meet a cow and, mistaking it for a Bermuda lady, he would make an elaborate bow and say, "How do you do, madam?" He would then meet a Bermuda lady, and mistaking her for a cow, would say, "Get out of the way, you old beast." This, and other trifling eccentricities which most people would have smiled at and thought no more of, gave serious offence, and the parishioners determined that they would not have him as their Rector. They petitioned the Governor, I believe, but without avail. When the Governor came to induct him, he found the approaches to the church blocked by a large crowd of Bermudians from all parts of the island, who refused to allow him to enter the building, and the induction could not take place. Several attempts were made, but with the same result. There was a law-suit over the matter. The unfortunate clergyman had, of course, to employ one of the local lawyers, who adopted the wrong procedure and made some other technical errors, so that the Island court decided against him and on appeal the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council upheld the decision. So he

never got possession of his benefice at all, and finally left the place in despair.

Bermudians were exceedingly proud of this exploit and never tired of bragging about it and quoting it as an example of the uselessness of trying to resist them when they had once thoroughly made up their minds about anything. And indeed any unfortunate stranger, whether clergyman, or layman, was as helpless as a captive in a den of brigands if they joined forces against him.

The Church in Bermuda is an Archdeaconry comprised of nine parishes, originally under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, but afterwards, by Letters Patent, transferred to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Newfoundland. When Bishop Field died, in 1876, these Letters expired, and the Crown owing to the decision in the Colenso case, would not renew them, so Bermuda was left without any episcopal supervision. The inhabitants immediately seized the opportunity of taking the management of the Church into their own hands. They formed a Synod to which they transferred the rights of patronage which had been exercised by the Governor, constituted themselves a diocese—a most unheard-of proceeding—and hired a Bishop at a small salary to visit the island once in two years, to confirm and perform

any other episcopal functions that might be required. They obtained legislative sanction from the local parliament for these arrangements, but entirely ignored the Archbishop of Canterbury, under whose Metropolitan jurisdiction the Church had been since the first days of the Colony. In a word, they practically severed their connection with the Church of the Mother Country, although they professed to be "in spiritual union and communion" with Her and called themselves "The Church of England in Bermuda." Their ideas of ecclesiastical government seem to have been borrowed from America, discarding, however, all the safeguards of the American system which secure a certain measure of justice and fair play for the Clergy.

The parishes were under the control of Church Vestries. These were elected by holders of freehold property amounting to a certain value; they might or might not be Church people, and it was not necessary that they should even reside in the parish. In one of the parishes of which I was Rector most of the electors were non-resident. In the United States the Church Vestries are elected by the pew-holders and those who subscribe to the Church funds, but in Bermuda these people had no voice in the management of affairs

unless they happened to be freeholders, which very few of them were.

The Vestry nominated a clergyman to a vacant benefice, the Synod appointed him, and the electors fixed his stipend. They claimed the right to do this every three years, and "if they should see fit" to continue it or increase it at the expiration of that period. It is characteristic of the Bermudian way of looking at things that this was not told me when I was offered a benefice in the Island. When I afterwards called attention to the fact, a member of the Vestry naïvely remarked, "Oh, of course we did not tell you that, as if we had you might not have come." It was my disagreeable duty to dispute the right of the electors to withhold my stipend "if they should see fit." They based their claim to do this on an Act of the local Parliament, undoubtedly passed with the intention of giving them this power, but so carelessly drawn as to be susceptible of quite a different construction.

I had the misfortune to fall out with the Attorney-General, a very good fellow in many ways, but one of the most dictatorial persons I have ever met. He practically governed the Island. He was related to all the leading families and managed the legal affairs of most

of the inhabitants. He and his relatives determined that I should go, and as they held everything in their hands I was advised that this was the best thing I could do. Wisely or unwisely, I determined to fight them. The position certainly looked pretty hopeless. The Chief Justice was the Attorney-General's father ; the only other lawyer in the place of any standing was a near relative, and the other lawyers had their own interests to consider and couldn't afford to oppose the reigning family. The Attorney-General openly boasted that it would be useless for me to go to law, but, as things turned out, he was wrong.

As may be supposed, the administration of justice being concentrated in the hands of one family did not inspire confidence, and the first thing that had to be done was to get it altered. I fancy the Governor (Sir Henry Geary), who was a firm friend to me, must have made some strong representations to the authorities in England, for quite unexpectedly, about a year after this unfortunate dispute arose, the Chief Justice resigned. He was over eighty and his discharge of his duties had given rise to a good deal of criticism during the latter period of his tenure of office. I may say in passing that he was a most charming old gentleman, and I feel sure that had my case come before him he would



have endeavoured to adjudicate fairly upon it. His successor was a man whose ability was quite above the average and he was in no way connected with the Island or its inhabitants.

This change in the Justiciary put me in a much stronger position and I had the additional good fortune to secure the services of an independent lawyer from Demerara. He was an excellent fellow in every way and very well up in his work, and argued my case with a good deal of skill, with the result that I obtained judgment in my favour, much, I fear, to the chargin of the Attorney-General, for whom I really felt quite sorry, for it must have been most annoying to him to have had the worst of a legal duel with a black man.

He and his friends had been kind enough to give me six month's notice, just as if I had been a servant in their employment. I fought them for four years, supported, I am glad to say, by a large majority of my parishioners. Of course, after the manner of Bermudians, my opponents refused to submit to the law when it was against them; they talked about appealing, and even going to prison rather than obey the decision of the Court. But having demonstrated the arbitrary injustice and illegality of their proceedings and having



remained in the place as long as I intended to, I decided to return to England. Before I left they paid my arrears of stipend and my costs in the legal proceedings. And I sincerely hope that I taught them a lesson. They seemed to think that the clergy had to obey their orders and that they could be "starved out" if they declined to take this view of their position. They learnt this, and other objectionable practices, from the United States, where such things are of common occurrence and where the richer laity often contrive to deprive a clergyman of his professional income if they don't happen to like him.

Bermuda was a gay little place, and during the season, which lasted from the middle of November to the end of May, there was a ceaseless round of entertainments: dances, dinners, picnics, gymkanas, concerts, theatricals and card-parties. I never met people who took life more easily or enjoyed it more thoroughly. American visitors, from all parts of the States, came in thousands, and although most of them were anything but desirable, yet some of them were a welcome addition to the social life of the little community. The presence of the Army and Navy was a great attraction, and I noticed in the advertisements about Bermuda in the New York papers the

announcement that "British officers in uniform attend the hotel dances." I dare say the great attraction that Bermuda now has for Americans is that it is the nearest place where they can get a drink. And I should not be surprised to hear that Bermudians, many of whom laid the foundation of their fortunes, or resuscitated their fortunes, by blockade-running during the Civil War, are now increasing their wealth by "bootlegging." They have a natural aptitude for enterprises of this kind.

The quaintest thing in the colony was the local Parliament. The early records of the island show how the inhabitants, taking advantage of the carelessness and indifference of the Home Government, gradually 'filched' representative institutions, on much the same plan as the Scotch errand-boy who stole five shillings from his master's till, but was never found out because he was prudent enough only to take a penny at a time. The House of Assembly, as it was called, consisted of thirty or forty members, each of whom received eight shillings a day as long as the session lasted. As the incomes of the well-to-do classes in Bermuda averaged about £500 a year, legislative honours were eagerly sought. The great object was to protract the sessions for as long as possible. Legislation was chiefly concerned with matters

like widening a road, or erecting a pump, or furnishing Government House—there were lengthy debates, I remember, on whether the Governor should be supplied with a paino—and the way these and similar questions were discussed and re-discussed, and the number of amendments that were proposed, and the adjournments that took place, and the Committees that were appointed, was most amusing. The question of widening the channel into St. George's harbour, which seriously affected the financial position of the inhabitants of Hamilton, was debated for nearly a quarter of a century, and is probably still under discussion. The debates were reported, and published by Hansard. Even after they had been edited and touched up by the reporter they were very queer reading. What they were like in reality I do not know, as I was never present at one of them, but I have been told that at times the language used was exceedingly violent and that personalities were indulged in, such as are sometimes heard in the bar parlour of a village inn. The Speaker of the House was a most respectable seedsman who presided over his emporium in Front Street in his shirt-sleeves. At noon every day, when parliament was sitting, he would don his coat and inform his customers, with an air of great importance

that he could not serve them as he had to be off to "the house."

In the interests of English people whose duties required them to reside in the place, Bermuda ought to have been a Crown Colony. But as representative institutions are never withdrawn from a colony except on the petition of the colony itself, or for persistent refusal to carry out the orders of the Home Government, there is no prospect of its ever becoming one.

I don't suppose there is any other place in the world, in proportion to its size, where there are so many aged women. The Bishop used to say that in every house in Bermuda you find, in a back bedroom, an old woman over ninety years of age. The climate and conditions were favourable to longevity. The air was absolutely pure; there was no smoke, no trains, no motors (the Legislature passed an Act forbidding their introduction into the island), no noise, none of the wear and tear of modern life; everything was calm, peaceful and soothing, and men and women retained their youthful vigour long after they had reached the age of seventy. I remember one old lady who on her hundredth birthday attended church with her niece, a damsel of eighty-six. There was a heavy shower after the service, and I called the next day to inquire how they were,

fearing that they might have been caught in it.

“Oh, we are all right, thank you,” they said in reply to my inquiries. “But I can tell you,” added the niece, “that we girls had to run very hard to get shelter.”

They did not in the least realize their age. Another old lady about eighty, whom I called to condole with on the loss of her sister, who was some years her senior, told me 'midst her sobs that “Sarah was always so good, but I am *such a giddy girl*”! As the “giddy girl,” distracted by grief, had forgotten to put on the flaxen wig she usually wore, she presented such a curious appearance that I had a good deal of difficulty in preserving the solemnity which the occasion required.

In many ways they were a very simple people, and there was a wonderful amount of family love and affection among them. Some of them had never left the island, and their feeling of superiority to the outside world was naturally very strong. Not that any amount of travel would ever alter Bermudians in this respect. A detachment of the Bermuda Volunteers went to London in 1897 to take part in the Jubilee celebrations. The Adjutant, wishing to shake them out of their self-complacency, told the Sergeant in charge to take them into the City, to the Bank, in the busiest time of the day,

when the traffic was heaviest ; he thought this might surprise them. All they said was, “ ’Um, a bit like Front Street ! ”

Turning over the files of the *Bermuda Gazette*, I found that on one occasion the editor expressed a hope “ that our sister isle [England] will learn a little wisdom of us.” And when Sir Thomas Lipton was competing for the Cup and a leading Bermudian visited the States, the same paper remarked that “ Sir Thomas will now have the chance of learning the right way to sail a yacht ! ”

This kind of thing struck me as being very comic at first, but it became rather a bore when you were expected to take it seriously.

Although I may be considered inconsistent, I think that if I had plenty of money I should go back and live there. As I remember it, I know no other place where one could pass one’s declining days in greater peace and quietness and in more agreeable surroundings. As for the Bermudians, they never made themselves disagreeable to people who were well-to-do and spent their money freely in the place ; and in this, at least, they were very much like the majority of people elsewhere.



## VIII

### BRITISH GUIANA

**B**EFORE returning to England from Bermuda I spent a year in the West Indies, at Georgetown, Demerara, where I took charge of a parish during the absence of the Vicar on a holiday. In that part of the world people take their holidays every three years if they can manage it. After working for two years in an atmosphere like the hot room of a Turkish Bath, they need a change into a more bracing and invigorating climate, especially if they have been the victims of malaria, which comparatively few white people escape.

It would require a more able pen than mine to do justice to the beautiful places I visited on my journey to British Guiana. Our first stop was at St. Kitts which we reached one morning at daybreak. Very glorious it looked bathed in all the colours of the rainbow, and the top of Mount Misery hidden in a cloud of red and gold. The little town of Basse Terre, with its quaint red-roofed houses, gradually emerged into view as the sun rose higher and higher. For a moment or two I thought I

was in fairyland and not in the real world, but as the shadows fled away and we drew nearer to the shore, this pleasant impression was dispelled. The Island, like many other things here belcw looked better at a distance, than it did close to. When you landed it hardly seemed beautiful at all ; it struck me as being poverty-stricken and rather dirty.

At that time the sugar industry was in a very bad way, and the mystery was how the inhabitants managed to live ; but the black people who composed the greater part of the population seemed bright and happy enough. Early as it was there was a large crowd of them—the men in white duck suits with straw hats, and the women gaily dressed with red handkerchiefs round their heads—on the primitive wooden pier which served as a landing-stage, awaiting our arrival, and chattering like a lot of jack-daws. The fortnightly visit of the steamer was the most exciting event of their lives.

It is wonderful how Government Officials, Planters and Professional men who are obliged to live in these remote places manage to adapt themselves to their environment. I suppose that most of our wants in life are artificial—take, for example, newspapers. When I was in England I could not do without my daily

paper, it seemed as necessary as food and clothing. But in Bermuda I found it quite easy, after a time, to do without it. The English papers arrived once a fortnight, and when I had been away from home six months they had no particular interest for me.

We stopped at most of the Leeward Islands—Nevis, St. Lucia, Antigua, Montserrat, Dominica, St. Vincent, Grenada and Barbados ; with the exception of the last they are all very much alike. As you approach them from the sea they resemble Dartmoor Tors in a tropical setting. It was very delightful cruising about among them, the weather was favourable and the tradewinds tempered the heat so that you hardly felt it. The ship was airy and specially built for the Tropics, and until we reached Barbados I was the only passenger on board : I had plenty of books and enjoyed the quiet. At night I used to lie on deck and gaze at the Southern Cross and dream of the old West Indian life described in *Tom Cringle*, and all the thrilling events that had taken place in the waters over which I was travelling.

We coaled at St. Lucia. This is a beautiful island, noted chiefly as being the home of the deadly fer-de-lance, which I believe is now almost extinct.

The coaling was rather an interesting sight ;

the black people carried the coal on board in large baskets which they balanced on their heads in a way which seemed marvellous to those who did not know the knack of doing it. While we were coaling I amused myself by throwing coins to the diving boys who swarmed around the ship and would retrieve a penny from a depth of forty or fifty feet. In these islands the inhabitants seem as much, if not more at home in the water, than they are on land.

Barbados was certainly brighter and more attractive than the other islands, and had the appearance of greater prosperity. It is one of our oldest colonies, having come into our possession in the early part of the seventeenth century. It is twenty-one miles long and fourteen broad, and (I speak under correction) had, at the time I visited it, a population of 166,000 inhabitants. How they lived is a mystery only known to themselves. The struggle for existence must have been intensely severe; and, if it did nothing else, it developed their intelligence, for they were a very enterprising set of people and as sharp as needles. In fact, there was a saying that when the North Pole was discovered it would be found that a Barbadian, and most likely a Scotchman, had already been there.

It is a very loyal colony and prides itself

on never having yielded to the Authority of the Commonwealth in the seventeenth century.

When the Boer War broke out the House of Assembly is reported to have cabled the British Government : " Barbados is at the back of you."

Bridgetown, the Capital, is known as " Little London." I was escorted round it by an old coloured man whose trousers were so extensively patched that the original garment must have disappeared, affording an interesting example of continuity without identity. He never stopped talking and poured forth a flood of information on the island and its inhabitants.

At the top of the High Street there is a statue of Lord Nelson, not a very remarkable work of art, and by no means improved by being painted green.

" This," said my guide, " is Lord Nelson, sah. You may have heard of him in England ! "

His account of the style in which the richer island families lived in the old days, when the sugar industry was flourishing, was quite interesting. There was a continuous round of hospitalities and entertainments. Every one kept open house. They could afford to do it as living was cheap and money was plentiful, so the old Barbadians were able to enjoy themselves in an almost princely fashion.

There were no less than four baronetcies among them, and they were immensely proud of these honours. In fact the pride of the Barbadians was proverbial. If anyone crossed them, however great a personage he might be, they combined against him and he had to go. Bishop Mitchinson, in an unguarded moment, said something which upset them and they made things so difficult for him that he resigned the See.

The Bishop who was there when I visited the island interested me exceedingly by his engaging candour about his matrimonial ventures. He had been married three times. The first time for love, the second for money, the third for companionship in his declining years. He seemed to think that Divine Providence had a special regard for his welfare in enabling him to make these arrangements, and that the Apostolic injunction that a Bishop should be "the husband of one wife" meant one wife at a time.

This reminds me of a story of the Bishops of the Eastern Church who came to this country to gain information about the Church of England and its practices, and were instructed therein by some members of the Anglo-Catholic Party who are very keen on reunion with the East. When the good men were told that we allowed our Bishops to marry, even after they had been raised to the Episcopate, they looked



grave. When it was explained that if a Bishop's wife died, he might take another, they looked shocked. When it was further explained that if the second wife died he might marry a third, and a fourth after that they lifted their hands in pious horror and exclaimed: "O mon Dieu!"

The Catholic instinct, both Latin and Eastern, is outraged by the idea of a married bishop. As Newman remarked there is something incongruous in a prelate of the Church "going about with a woman tucked under his arm." The French Dominican who gave a lecture in London on Anglican Orders and concluded by asking "Vich Vill you 'ave—ze. Pope or ze Archbishop of Canterbury with hees *WIFE*"? knew the right note to strike in addressing his co-religionists. The Roman Church is the only organization, religious or secular, which in these days keeps women in their place.

But to return to Barbados—I may remark that I not only saw but ate the celebrated flying-fish, of whose existence I have heard people express doubts. They were most delicious, in flavour not unlike a sole but more delicate. I also helped to catch a shark. We baited for him with a leg of pork on an iron hook, and it took half a dozen of us to

haul him on board. He was an ugly customer and I was relieved when one of the crew dispatched him with an axe, as he flopped about the deck and snapped at us viciously. It is not generally known that shark is edible. I once had two helpings of shark without knowing it. When I had dispatched the second helping my hostess asked me whether I knew what I had been eating. I said :

“ No, but whatever it was it was very good.”

“ Well,” she said, “ you’ve been eating shark and I am glad you liked it.”

I felt for the moment as horrified as if she had told me I had been eating “ baby,” but was comforted to know that I had only partaken of the fins, which, when properly dressed and served in a salad, make quite a decent dish. Whale, which in flavour and appearance is not unlike veal, is regarded as a luxury by many people.

We proceeded in a leisurely fashion from Barbados to Trinidad, which is the most prosperous of our West Indian possessions, and is, in fact, the only one which is paying its way. This is chiefly owing to the revenue derived from the wonderful pitch lake, which rises (if that is the right word) in Venezuela and flows under the sea and bubbles up in the island. It is about 150 acres in extent and practically inexhaustible. It was let to an

American Company at an absurdly low rent, about £50,000 a year, I think. As it is capable of supplying all the naval dockyards in Europe, if not in the world, with pitch, it seems a pity that the Colonial Government did not keep it in its own hands. The distance between Trinidad and the mainland is at a certain point not more than forty or fifty feet, and as we passed through the Dragon's mouth I was able to touch the shores of Venezuela with my hand ; this is the nearest I got to that country.

Port of Spain, the capital of Trinidad, is a thriving city, but hot and stuffy ; there is no tradewind on that side of the island owing to its being under the lee of the mainland. But the Savannah, around which are the beautiful houses and gardens of the chief residents, including Government House, reminds you that there are compensations near at hand, and that with an adequate income life might be endurable even in a temperature of 90 degrees in the shade with no cool breezes.

Trinidad is an old Spanish settlement, and has been in our possession since the Peace of Amiens. Many of the inhabitants are Roman Catholics and the place swarmed with ecclesiastics and "religious," among them the Dominicans were conspicuous. They were huge men and their white habits made them look

larger than they really were. They were driven about in low carriages something like an enlarged invalid chair, and when two of them occupied one of these vehicles I felt sorry for the unfortunate mule which had to pull them; an elephant would have been more suitable for the job.

I had a Roman priest, a German, as a travelling companion between Barbados and Trinidad. He was an extremely agreeable man, and seemed chiefly interested in the subject of his drinks.

“Yes,” he said, “I like whisky and soda, it is goot, vera goot, but I love beer. Give me beer, I need much beer, it supports me in this climate, it comforts me, it keeps me fit. *Ach!* it is goot.”

So, true to his convictions, he drank it all day. He explained that normally it had no effect upon him, though he added, “You never know when your stomach may betray you.” As far as I could gather his stomach had recently been abominably treacherous, which was the reason why he had been summoned to see his Bishop. He did not like Bishops, and entertained the gloomiest views about his own Bishop’s fate in the other world.

“He is a bad man,” he said, “he will go to hell.”

When at Trinidad I visited Tobago, which is

supposed to be Robinson Crusoe's island, though there is nothing to identify it with that place, which is, I believe, somewhere in the Pacific.

Tobago is the last place on earth where you would expect to meet anybody you knew. The village where I landed consisted of a few wattled huts thatched with palmetto, and a store built of wood with a corrugated iron roof. When I came ashore I heard a languid voice say:

“ Well, Goldring, how are you ? ”

For the moment I thought that my stomach must have “betrayed me,” or that I had a touch of the sun, and was relieved when I found that the voice belonged to a brother clergyman I had known in England, who was standing before me in the flesh. He suffered terribly from asthma, and could only feel at ease in a damp heat, so he passed the summer months wandering about the West Indies doing occasional duty when he could get any. He stayed a year with me in Georgetown and I don't expect I shall ever meet another man who took so much medicine and managed to survive it. He travelled with a miniature chemist's shop, and was dosing himself for real and imaginary complaints all day. Every morning on rising he took a powder for his liver, immediately before breakfast a pill for his heart, immediately after breakfast another pill for



his digestion, at eleven o'clock a dose of mixture for his lungs, at twelve he was massaged and took another dose of mixture for his rheumatism, more pills followed before and after tea and dinner, and he ended with a sleeping draught.

Except the asthma there was really nothing the matter with him, and he must have been as strong as a horse to have stood all the stuff that he consumed. His most curious delusion was that he had a "fold" in his stomach which necessitated his pumping himself out every Saturday evening. This operation always took place just before dinner, and he would come to that meal with an appetite like a ravening wolf, and make short work of all the provisions in the house. At last I, and the other man living with me, had to stipulate that if he continued these Saturday clearances he must provide an extra supply of food for his own use. He was, in all other respects, an exceptionally nice fellow, and in his lucid intervals quite conscious of his neurotic condition, which he attributed to his having descended from a long line of port wine-drinking clergymen who bequeathed him these gouty disorders and very little else.

Georgetown is below the sea level, and as you approach it presents rather a strange appearance. The first things visible are the



large smoke stacks of the sugar-refineries on the various plantations. Then appear the great mangrove trees planted to protect the sea wall, which is ten feet high and about 300 yards long.

British Guiana, of which Surinam, Essequibo and Demerara are Counties, has changed hands several times during the last 300 years. In 1640 it was held by the French, who were soon expelled by the natives; in 1650 we took possession of it; in 1667 it fell into the hands of the Dutch, and after we had repeatedly lost it and regained it, in 1814 it was ceded to us by Treaty.

It still bears the impress of its connection with Holland, The towns are on the Dutch model, and many of them have Dutch names, so have the streets, the laws are based on the old Dutch Code which is largely an adaptation of Roman law, and many of the customs are Dutch.

However unattractive Georgetown may appear as you approach it from the sea, it is very charming when you get within it. It is the Garden City of the West Indies. Canals, in which are beautiful red and gold *Regina lilies*, run down the streets with a broad road on either side. The effect is very pleasing: Main Street, with its picturesque houses, lovely trees and delightful splashes of colour from tropical plants and flowers, is probably one

of the most beautiful streets in that part of the world. The Bruikdam, with its avenue of stately palms, and Waterloo Street, where I lived, are also extremely attractive, and the Botanical Gardens leave little to be desired. The sea wall is the great rendezvous of the city, where everybody promenades in the cool of the evening. The sea is discoloured by the wash of the Orinoco and is a painful contrast to the glorious sea of Bermuda, but its voice was just as pleasant and you had to listen to that and keep your eyes off its muddy waters.

The inhabitants were quite as interesting as the town, and almost as picturesque. Guiana is known as the land of the Six Peoples : English, Portuguese, Africans, Chinese, Coolies and Native Indians—principally Caribs.

The coolies were imported from India for work on the sugar plantations under what was known as the Indenture System, which, although it has been denounced by political agitators, and has now, I believe, been abandoned, worked on the whole remarkably well. The immigrants were well looked after by the Government, which took them under its protection during the time of their contract, and secured them proper accommodation, fair wages, medical attendance and most other things they needed for their souls and bodies.

In return for these benefits the Government insisted upon their doing the work they were engaged to do, and punished them if they did not do it. This, of course, constituted a great grievance in the eyes of all the Radicals of the Colony—usually coloured men on the make—though the Indians themselves did not seem to mind it. At the end of five years, or whatever the term of their indenture, they were at liberty to return to their own country, in which case the Government paid their passage, or to remain in the Colony, in which case they had a grant of land. They usually elected to do the latter, and as they were hard-working and thrifty they did very well for themselves.

One of my richest parishioners was an Indian. His family had been in Guiana for three generations. His grandfather was a coolie labourer, and after his discharge started in business and made quite a respectable fortune. His son increased it, and his son (my parishioner) increased it still more: he was in fact one of the most well-to-do men in the city. He lived in good style, and drove to church on Sundays in his carriage and pair with a white coachman (an Englishman) on the box.

His daughters were educated at good schools in England and got their clothes from Paris;

he had a country house, kept a stud of race-horses, dispensed liberal hospitality, and was more like an English country gentleman than an Indian. I have never met a more generous man and if I ever needed money for the church, or for any good purpose, he was always quite ready to give it. He was one of the few men I have known who really seemed pleased to give, and the only thing that appeared to annoy him was being thanked for what he did. "No thanks," he would say, "I am only too glad to do what I can." That is the kind of man who rejoices the heart of the clergy, and I only wish there were a few more like him. I do not pretend that his was a typical case, but it shows that there were possibilities of a prosperous career for Indians in the colony, and that all the stories, told by agitators, about their ill-treatment and their being kept in slavery, and left to starve when their time of service expired, were a pack of lies.

As may be imagined, the streets of Georgetown were full of interest. There are not many other places in the world where you can see such a mixed crowd. Laughing, chattering negroes, demure and solemn-looking Indians; coolie women, adorned with gold and silver ornaments, in brightly coloured silks, dainty Chinese ladies in their native dress, Indian

merchants, Fakirs, Portuguese traders, and Native Indians passed along in a ceaseless throng from sunrise to sunset.

The climate had rather a bad reputation. People died with alarming suddenness. A man, apparently in good health, might be dining with you on Monday, and on Wednesday you might be required to conduct his funeral. These deaths were seldom as sudden as they appeared, malaria is an insidious thing and in cases in which the blood had become thoroughly alcholized (which I regret to say were not uncommon) was very often fatal. I had more funerals in a week than I have in my present parish in four or five years.

I began with a funeral. The morning after my arrival my servant came and told me that a black man (my servant, I may explain, was as black as coal) wanted to see me. I went downstairs and found a nigger with his face wreathed in smiles.

“What can I do for you?” I asked.

“Will you bury my wife this afternoon, sah?” he replied.

In the course of my life I have met not a few bereaved husbands who have accepted the loss of their wives with considerable composure, and some who showed the same tokens of relief and satisfaction which men do when



they come out of prison, but never before had I seen such unconcealed joy. But I was entirely mistaken : I did not understand the peculiar mentality of the negro and his ability to keep his feelings in water-tight compartments. The smiles expressed his delight at meeting the new clergyman, which was the predominant emotion at the moment. In the afternoon he shed tears like hailstones on his wife's coffin and was the very picture of inconsolable grief.

Georgetown is built on a mud flat, consequently when you dig about two feet below the surface you come to a kind of black slime, which made grave-digging rather difficult and taking a funeral an unpleasant experience. As soon as the coffin was dropped into the grave up splashed the mud, and if you did not get out of the way in time you got covered with it. The negro sexton who officiated at these functions had nothing on whatever except a loin-cloth, and, to mark the dignity of his office, a tall hat !

Burying the dead is one of the corporal works of mercy, and therefore of spiritual advantage to the person performing it, which was some consolation to me for the many dreary hours I spent at the cemetery during my year in Georgetown. Unless a man is a very great



saint, I can imagine no position more awful than that of a cemetery chaplain. A friend of mine, a naval chaplain, once took duty for a month at one of the big London cemeteries. He said the gloom and the monotony, the weeping relatives, the trappings of woe, and the rest, were enough to send any ordinary man off his head. He, the Roman Catholic priest, and the Presbyterian minister used to sit together in the waiting-room, and when a funeral arrived they exchanged bets as to whose it was. By this means he preserved his sanity and, incidentally won enough money to pay for all his amusements during his stay in Town.

The interesting feature about the work in Georgetown was that instead of visiting your parishioners, as you do in England, they visited you. Every morning I held a reception in the parish room attached to the church, There were as a rule about forty or fifty black people to see me. I supplied them with orders for the hospital, and with characters for situations, I wrote their letters, made their wills, adjusted their family quarrels, resolved their theological difficulties, excommunicated offenders (that is refused to sign their Communion cards) collected the contributions of the faithful, and, in short, did as best I could all that my flock wanted me to do.

Black people are nothing but children and for the most part they are simple, affectionate, honest souls, very sensitive and very responsive to kindness; there are, of course, some bad characters among them, but the proportion is not larger than among white people, and, in Georgetown, not so large. They have a keen sense of humour and are most amusing. This is the kind of thing which took place at my morning meetings. A picturesque old negro woman with a red handkerchief round her head would timidly approach the table where I was sitting.

“Well, Mary, what can I do for you this morning?” I would ask.

“Oh, reverend, I’ve had nothing in my po’ inside for three days.”

“That’s very sad, Mary, but it isn’t true, is it?”

“No, reverend, it isn’t true.”

And yet Mary had no idea of telling a falsehood. Her somewhat alarming statement was only her rhetorical way of informing me that she was hard up and wanted some help. Then a small boy whose face shone like a pair of well-polished black boots, would want a character for a situation as page-boy, clerk, or messenger. “What is your name?” I would ask.

“Augustus Stanley Montague Wellington Caisey, sah.”

Black women, I may explain, love to give their children grand names. I asked one of them why they did it.

“We’ve got nothing else to give them, sah,” was the reply.

If Master Augustus Stanley Montague Wellington had a good record he got his character. If he hadn’t he got a good wiggling for his cheek in applying for one and was told to come again when he had earned one.

The family disputes made a considerable demand upon one’s powers of endurance, as the parties to the quarrel all talked together in the most wildly excited manner imaginable. I say “talked,” but they really screamed and shouted at the top of their voices. It took some time and often a good deal of shouting on my part to get them quiet, and then each one had to state his case and the others to keep silence while he was doing so. When they had all had their say I scolded them like a lot of children and they would as often as not begin to weep, then I made a joke and all ill-feeling was dispelled in laughter and they departed on excellent terms with each other.

The black people had their own way of regulating sex relations. There was not much promiscuity among them, but many of them lived in what we should call concubinage, but

which the Canon law regards as a kind of marriage *naturalium*. That is to say they cohabited without any legal bond or any tie except their mutual consent. They often lived together like this for a lifetime, and were perfectly faithful to each other. Looking at matters from an ecclesiastical standpoint I was rather shocked at what seemed to me a flagrant disregard of the laws of the Church, but I afterwards came to the conclusion that on the whole it was better for most of them than ordinary marriage. This was brought home to me by an experience which was as enlightening as it was distressing. I persuaded a couple who had lived together quite happily for over twenty years to get married. The night of the marriage the wife got drunk (a thing she was never known to have done before) and shook her marriage lines in her husband's face and yelled: "I'se got the lines, you can't get rid of me." That was just it. Under the voluntary system if a woman misbehaved herself the man *did* get rid of her. If a man misbehaved himself the woman left him. It was a perfectly simple arrangement and worked quite smoothly. Legal marriage created all manner of difficulties, so, except by the Communicant members of various religious bodies, it was not the custom. After this

I thought it best not to meddle in these matters.

Georgetown was the cheapest place to live in I have ever known. There were three of us at the Vicarage, and we lived like fighting cocks on £2 a week. Every morning the cook came to me with a list of the supplies she wanted for the day—nothing was kept in stock. I handed her the money and she bought them in the market. We had three servants—two maids and a man—and their united wages came to about £2 10s. a month and they kept themselves. The man, I believe, slept in the house, and the women came at 6 a.m. and left after dinner at about 8 p.m., going home for their meals. The cook was a treasure, when she had prepared something extra good for us she would peer round the dining-room door to see whether we were enjoying it. If we were, which was usually the case, for she was quite an artist in her own line, she would go into fits of laughter and we could hear her slapping her fat sides and rolling about in exuberant enjoyment of her success. I never knew her surname or where she lived, or whether she was married or single. I only knew her as a ministering angel (albeit a black one) who secured us a cheap food supply, and cooked us excellent meals for the modest salary of 10/6 a month.

British Guiana is rich in natural resources, for, in addition to the sugar, coffee and cocoa plantations, there is abundance of valuable timber, rubber, gold and diamonds. I often wondered why something was not done to develop the country.

If Americans possessed it they would, I am sure, to use one of their expressive phrases, "tear the bowels out of it." When I was there nobody seemed particularly interested in the matter, an apathetic state of mind which may possibly have been due to the muggy heat.

Several capitalists visited the colony during my stay with a view to tapping one or other of its supplies of potential wealth, and, according to their own account, were choked off by officialism and red tape. I never heard the official side of the case, but I cannot help thinking that there must have been a certain amount of truth behind these complaints.

If you are not susceptible to malaria and don't mind a moist, warm climate, there are many less pleasant places for a sojourn than Georgetown. And, if living is anything like as cheap there to-day as it was twenty years ago, it would be quite an ideal retreat in these days of reduced incomes and high prices.



## IX

### THE ARMY AND NAVY

A MAN I met who was an acting-chaplain during the Boer War told me the following story. At the station to which he was appointed he received a good deal of assistance from the Sergeant-Major of one of the regiments, who did all he could to help him in his work. After he had been there a week or two, the Sergeant-Major asked whether things were going on satisfactorily and whether there was anything more he could do for him.

“Yes,” replied the chaplain. “But I am sorry that nobody, so far, has come to the early celebration of the Holy Communion.”

“Indeed, sir?” replied the Sergeant. “I will see about that, sir.”

The next Sunday morning twelve men put in an appearance; on the following Sunday twelve more, and the same number came every Sunday. The chaplain was pleased at this devotion, although a little puzzled that twelve men—

neither more nor less—should present themselves for communion every week, so he asked the Sergeant about it.

“Well, it’s like this, sir. I had to get it into the regulations somehow, so I told *them* off *for fatigue duty!*” explained that officer.

This is rather characteristic of Army religion as far as I had the opportunity of observing it. What there is of it seems to be very much a matter of military discipline. I do not pretend to speak with much knowledge of the subject, for, although I was acting-chaplain to one or two regiments while I was in Bermuda, my duties consisted of taking one ordinary parade service on Sunday mornings and visiting the hospital if there happened to be any sick who needed my ministrations. I think that the ordinary Tommy regarded the regulation service much as men, in my time, regarded the compulsory chapels at Cambridge; that is, as rather a nuisance. He liked to get it over as soon as possible; if the sermon exceeded ten minutes he began stamping his feet, and the preacher had to close down. The attendance at the Sunday evening services, which was voluntary, was fairly good if the chaplain happened to be popular and the singing was decent. But I think this was a habit Tommy brought with him from home; it is still the

custom in many country villages for the young men to go to church on Sunday evenings.

There is a story told of a Sergeant enrolling recruits who asked one the usual question, "What religion?" "Ain't got none," was the reply. "Well," said the Sergeant, "until you *do* get a religion, I shall put you down Church of England." But it would be unfair to our soldiers to say they have no religion. Like the agnostic don at Cambridge who recited the Athanasian Creed and explained afterwards, by way of apology, that he thought, after all, there might be "a kind of something," so our soldiers believe in "a kind of something" and show their faith in deeds if not in words. I am not referring to their courage in the face of the enemy or to their splendid devotion to duty; but to their heroic self-denial in rescuing their comrades under fire, in ministering to the wounded, and helping the disabled. There were countless instances of this in the Great War, and they cannot be accounted for simply as the fruits of military discipline: they are due to something deeper than that, something which probably the men themselves are scarcely conscious of; to that spark of divine life which Plato tells us is mixed with all human clay.

The effect of military discipline may be that it renders a man better able to respond to

the movements of this life in his soul when he is face to face with elemental facts and the artificial conventions of civilization drop away from him. It was my privilege to meet some very fine men in all ranks in the Army and some of the finest in the ranks of the non-commissioned officers. If they are not the "backbone" of the Army they certainly seem, as the saying is, "to run the show." Nearly all business matters were in their hands, under the supervision, of course, of their superior officers, who seldom, however, knew enough about book-keeping and kindred subjects to supervise effectively. The temptations to non-commissioned officers to enrich themselves dishonestly were abundant and the risk of discovery small, and yet it was very seldom that anything of the kind occurred.

I remember one case in Bermuda in connection with which there is rather an amusing story which may possibly shock the "uncommon guid," but which I am sure those of my readers who are blessed with a sense of humour will forgive my telling.

A Sergeant in the Engineers who was indiscreet enough to brag about his banking account, which led to inquiries, was discovered to have stolen several thousand pounds' worth of cement—enough to cover the whole of

Bermuda three or four times over—which he had purchased on behalf of the Government for some forts that were being erected, and had sold in America. He was prosecuted and sentenced to five years penal servitude. On the night of his conviction the non-commissioned officers of the Engineers gave their annual concert, in aid of some regimental, or Service, charity, at Ireland Island. It was an occasion when the Governor, the Bishop (if in Bermuda), and most of the leading officials were present, as the concert was usually a good one and the charity worthy of support. When the proceedings opened, a pot-bellied, plethoric, blotchy-faced, red-nosed, husky-voiced Sergeant-Major (a regular old limb of the Army) made a speech, and, no doubt with an eye to the unfortunate event that had just happened, felt it was his duty, by way of an apologia, to eulogize the Engineers and their work for the Army.

“Is there a finer set of men in the Service?” he asked. “Could you do without them? Who makes your roads? Who makes your railways? Who erects your telegraphs? Who builds your forts? Who—who?”

And at this point, most unfortunately, he hesitated, and he who hesitates is lost, for a raucous cockney voice from the back of the room shouted out:

“ ’Oo stole the bloody cement ! ”

There was silence for a second, during which we tried to look shocked, but it was no good ; the whole audience broke out into a roar of laughter, in which I am afraid the clergy joined.

I was for some time Chaplain to the 1st West Indian Regiment, which was stationed in my parish. They were men of magnificent physique and in their Zouave uniform—white turbans, red jackets trimmed with gold lace, dark-blue knickerbockers and white gaiters—their appearance was most picturesque. The Bermudian coloured people were rather jealous of them and called them “ the black cats with white feet.” This and other criticisms led to an occasional fracas, in which the black cats used their claws (razor-blades strapped on sticks) rather viciously. But apart from this, in which they were not wholly to blame, they were very good fellows, quiet, orderly, and well-behaved, and very proficient in their duties. They had one of the finest bands in the Army, and it was much appreciated when it came to England a few years ago. In the military sports and competitions that took place they always won most of the events, and accepted their success, as they did everything else, with a kind of passive resignation peculiar to them. There is a certain left-handedness about coloured



people which, in spite of their accomplishments, they can never quite get rid of. I remember a company of these men, going to receive their prizes, tripping over some ropes and falling in a heap at the foot of the prize-giver.

They were very religious, and spent their leisure in playing cards and reading the Bible. They were as fond of theological discussions as a Scotchman, and would lie in the sun and argue about pre-destination, and the doctrine of the Trinity, for hours together. Like Mr. Gladstone, they were "intensely interested in sermons" and, so far from tramping their feet when the sermon exceeded ten minutes, they would have listened all day. The most touching thing about them was their intense loyalty. Every one of them wore a locket round his neck in which was a photograph of Queen Victoria. It was a great grief to them that they were not allowed to take part in the South African War, but I believe it was not thought prudent to let them fight against white men.

We had about five thousand Boer prisoners in Bermuda while I was there, and most of them were encamped on a large island in my parish. The *Hotspur* and two gun-boats were placed on guard over them. The Boers were, for the most part, a dirty, mangy-looking

set of men, and it seemed incredible that they could have given us so much trouble. The Americans, of course, could not keep their inquisitive noses out of the camp, and abused the Governor's kindness in allowing them to visit it by writing untruthful and inflammatory articles in the New York papers about the cruel way we treated our prisoners. Several prisoners escaped and reached the States, where they were feted and made much of. The Bermudians were pro-Boer almost to a man, and fairly gushed over them and showered gifts on them, tobacco, cakes, chocolates, newspapers, games, and in fact, everything they were allowed to receive; they also built them a reading-room; but did nothing at all for the Warwickshires, who were in charge of them.

I was acting-chaplain to the *Hotspur* while she was in my parish, as the chaplain of the dockyard, the Rev. Ralph Wilson, was too far away to look after her. Mr. Wilson, who died a few months ago, was a well-known character in the Navy. In the announcement in the papers of the amount of his property, it stated that "he is said to have boxed the King's ears when he was a midshipman." I don't think this is correct, but from what he told me, he and Prince George (as he then was) were always coming into collision. At Malta,

the Prince, as officer of the watch, omitted, on one occasion, to salute Wilson when he came on board, and was at once reported to the skipper, who gave him a tremendous dressing-down and made him apologize. Wilson told me that soon after this he met the Prince in Pall Mall, and bowed to him and was passing on, when His Royal Highness stopped and shook hands with him. "I am afraid, Wilson, that you and I did not get on very well together at Malta, did we?" "No, sir, I'm afraid we didn't," answered Wilson. "Well, Wilson, you did me an awful lot of good, you know, and I'm very much obliged to you."

Wilson was about the last survivor of the old school of naval chaplains, and his methods of dealing with blue-jackets were unconventional and rather shocking to people who were sticklers for clerical propriety. Never having had anything to do with sailor-men, I thought it would be as well to talk things over with him before entering on my duties, and spent a day or two with him at Ireland Island. The morning after my arrival, as we were sitting smoking in his study, or office, there was rather a timid knock at the door.

"Come in," shouted Wilson, and in came a blue-jacket, looking very much "the morning after the night before."

“ Well, what do *you* want ? ”

“ Please, sir, I was feeling very ill last night, and I just took a drop of brandy and . . . ”

“ Out of my sight, you stinking son of Ham ; clear out, or I’ll kick you out,” roared Wilson, and the man bolted like a rabbit.

“ Oh,” I said, “ that’s the way you talk to them, is it ? But I am afraid there is—er—a virile force about your language which I cannot hope to emulate.”

“ Oh, blow your fine words,” he said. “ You wait and see, my boy ; you wait and see.”

Presently there was again a knock at the door, and the man reappeared.

“ What do you mean by coming back ? ” demanded Wilson.

“ Please, sir, I *was* very drunk last night.”

“ Ah, that’s better, my man, that’s much better. What did you tell me that d——d lie for ? Want me to put in a word for you with the skipper, do you ? Well, I’ll see what I can do. Hook it.”

In spite of his rough ways, the men adored him and as he was one of the kindest-hearted fellows on earth it was easy to understand.

One day when I was out with him we met a blue-jacket not only hopelessly drunk but quarrelsome-drunk ; in fact, simply spoiling

for a fight. He lurched up against us, nearly knocking me over.

"Look here, my man, you mustn't go on board like you are now, or there'll be the deuce to pay. You had better go into the Sailor's Home and sleep it off," said Wilson.

"I'll see you blankety, blankety, blankety-blanked, you blankety blank, before I'll go," replied Jack, launching a blow at Wilson's nose.

By way of reply, Wilson gave him one between the eyes, and he dropped like a log, and we hauled him into the Home, which happened to be close by. Next morning he had two gorgeous black eyes, and had not the faintest idea how he got them.

"'Oo gave me these?" he asked, looking at himself in the glass.

"Why, the parson, you moke. Were you too drunk to remember?" said one of his pals.

"What? Old beaky?" said the man. "Well, I don't mind what 'e does; 'e can do it again if he blankety well likes, blank him."

Wilson was quite a respectable boxer and he always kept a set of gloves for the use of his flock when there was bad feeling between any of the members of it. "Take the gloves and go and have it out, and I'll see fair play," was his invariable order on such occasions. "It's no good," he said, "talking to these



fellows about the Sermon on the Mount. The best thing is to let them slog away at each other for all they're worth, and get rid of their bad blood that way. There is never any ill-feeling when it is over, and they know who is top dog."

He was a wise old bird about many things, and a great enemy of humbug or any sort of pretension. He was a bit rough on young clergymen of advanced views who put on airs of superior piety, and I am afraid rather delighted in shocking them. His talk and his stories were "a bit thick" at times, and ladies were inclined to give him a wide berth, as they never knew what he would say next. I remember at afternoon tea, one day, at the Bishop's Lodge, Wilson happened to be there, although he hated such gatherings as the devil is said to hate holy water. The Bishop always wore his violet cassock on these occasions, and, as the Bermuda ladies were not very well up in questions of ecclesiastical vesture, they used to wonder what this wonderful garment was.

"Can you tell me, Mr. Wilson," asked one very prim and proper old maid, "why the Bishop wears that violet dressing-gown?"

"What, don't you know?" replied Wilson.

"No, indeed," said the lady.

"Well, he's got no trousers on, that's the reason."



The poor lady turned the colour of a beetroot and said she thought it was "most indelicate of the Bishop." Whether the Bishop overheard this conversation, or whether anybody told him of it, I don't know, but he never appeared again in his violet cassock at tea-time !

Wilson was always in hot water over something or other, and I doubt if there was another man in the Navy who had so many Service rows, usually caused by his taking the part of the under-dog, and sometimes, I am bound to say, by his indiscreet utterances.

For example, preaching one day in Bermuda Cathedral, he told a congregation of rich Americans that Judas, after he had betrayed his Master, had the decency to go and hang himself, and that it was a great pity that some of those present did not imitate his example ! And, at the time of the Venezuelan difficulty, he made some very forcible remarks about American ideas of honour which got him into trouble with the Authorities.

I don't think he could resist the temptation to indulge his peculiar humour whenever he saw an opening. I asked him to preach for me one Lent, and particularly requested him to choose some subject suitable to the congregation, which, I explained, was mainly composed of unmarried ladies. He said he

would be specially careful to do so, and delivered a lively and, in parts, rather embarrassing, discourse on the subject of "Marriage with a deceased wife's sister!"

Naval chaplains at the present time are men of very different stamp, and they have done a good deal to improve the tone of the Service. Blue-jackets to-day are, as a rule, decent, sober, self-respecting men, although, no doubt, there are exceptions. But in my old friend's time things were much rougher, and he was the kind of parson who was needed to handle men who were more impressed by sturdy common sense and plain, if rather coarse, speaking than by the more conventional methods usually adopted by those who ministered to them. There is something very charming about all sailor-men. And, in my forty years in the Ministry, I have never had to deal with nicer people.

## MEETINGS—CONTROVERSIES—PARTIES

THERE is nothing on earth so dull as a clerical meeting. In private intercourse the clergy find plenty to say to one another, although, like other professional men, they sometimes talk shop. When they meet together at a Ruridecanal Chapter or conference, they often seem tongue-tied. Perhaps they feel the futility of such gatherings; perhaps, in their modest estimate of themselves, they think that they have nothing to say worth hearing; and perhaps they want to get home as soon as possible and do not care to prolong the meeting by unnecessary speeches. When they do speak they deal with all questions from the parochial standpoint, and are very much given to recounting their personal experiences and to generalizing from imperfect data: what they have done or not done; what they have introduced or abandoned; what their parishioners have said and thought; liked or disliked, and so on. Even

when questions of public interest are under discussion the talk soon drifts into these channels.

In a University diocese, in which I held a benefice, the question of "The Church and Social Reform" was chosen for discussion at one of our Chapter meetings. Several members of the Chapter held college livings, one or two were ex-Fellows, and most of them had taken honours. They would, I thought, be able to illuminate this important subject with the ripe wisdom acquired by study and thought in the peaceful retirement of their parishes. I was encouraged in these anticipations by the opening remarks of the Rural Dean, who said that the subject was one in which we all felt great interest and on which he was sure the brethren (that was how we styled ourselves on these occasions) would have a good deal to say. After he had finished speaking there was a dead silence, and then the usual invitation from the chair for somebody to set the ball rolling.

At length an old Rector got up and said he had always taken a great interest in the matter and, as far as he could, endeavoured to promote social reform in his parish. For instance, he had always impressed upon his people the danger of having their pig-styes too near their houses. He enlarged upon this topic,

illustrating it by references to cases of sickness which had come under his notice, due to this cause. When he had concluded his remarks, the Rural Dean said he thought Mr. B. (who farmed his own glebe) would probably be able to tell us something about pigs. Mr. B. could and did, dwelling at some length on the best breed for that part of the country; and we talked pigs—the best ways of housing them, feeding them, fattening them, dealing with their ailments, killing them and curing them—for the rest of the afternoon!

I dare say my readers may find it difficult to believe this, but they would easily understand it if they realized how quickly even men of intellectual attainments run to seed in a country parish, and become entirely preoccupied with the little everyday things of life. There is a good deal of learning lying mildewed and useless in many of our rural parsonages.

Some years ago I had to address a meeting in the Midlands and my host was the Rector of the parish. I looked him up in Crockford and found that he had taken a first in three triposes, and I was rather appalled by the discovery, for how could I possibly hold my own in conversation with such a prodigiously learned man? However, knowing that really

learned men are, as a rule, very humble-minded and give other people credit for knowing more than they do themselves, I hoped for the best; at the worst, I could but sit and listen.

On my arrival at the rectory I was met by a typical Cambridge D.D. He was a short, stoutish man with a beard, and he wore the ordinary frock-coat, a turned-down collar and a white tie. He greeted me with solemn and restrained cordiality, and having made some obvious but not very original observations about the weather, the state of the roads, and the journey from London, he relapsed into profound silence. One or two timid remarks I ventured to make were answered by monosyllables, and so the time passed before dinner. About half-way through dinner, stimulated no doubt by a glass or two of sherry, he cleared his throat and remarked :

“ I suppose I know more about the Greek Testament than any other man in England.”

“ Indeed, sir ? ” I said. “ That is extremely interesting.”

Now, I thought, he is going to take pity on my ignorance and my darkened mind will be enlightened on vexed questions of textual criticism or on the authorship of the fourth Gospel. There was a long pause, during which he attended to his dinner. Then he said :



“I believe I have discovered an entirely new meaning for the particle  $\gamma\epsilon$  based on my studies in the Septuagint.” I bowed my head reverentially at this information and waited for him to enlarge upon the subject. But there was a longer pause than before, while he gave his attention to the savoury, then he added, “Other scholars do not agree with me.”

The only other remark he made during the meal was, “The port you are drinking is a sound wine, but I have better in my cellar.” And here, again, he raised my expectations only to disappoint them, for he didn’t produce the superior vintage !

At the meeting, over which he presided, he made a speech which certainly did not suggest that he had discovered a new meaning for a Greek particle, or anything else ; in fact, what he said would hardly have done credit to an intelligent Sunday school scholar. Whether he had run to seed in his rural retreat or whether he had crammed his head so full of knowledge that he couldn’t use his brains, I don’t know ; but a good many men like him can be found buried in out-of-the-way parishes up and down the country.

What did he do with himself when he was not browsing over Greek particles ? Well, I found out that he used to sit up to the small hours of the morning, reading—novels !

The subject of conversations with learned men reminds me of a story I had from a very charming old clergyman I met in Plymouth, not long ago. He was asked by a friend to dine with the great Dr. Kennedy (of Greek Grammar fame) and a learned Professor of Theology in the University of Cambridge. He declined at first. He said he was a very ordinary individual, with no pretensions to scholarship, and he felt sure that he would be quite out of his element in such company. "Not a bit," said his friend. "You talk to Dr. Kennedy about the last sensational murder case and to the Professor about your Cornish fishing-boats, and you will find that it will be quite all right."

He followed this tip. He introduced the subject of the latest murder, and on this Dr. Kennedy, who seemed to know all about every murder that had ever been committed, talked in the most interesting way imaginable; and later on he touched upon their local fishing-boats, about which the Professor discoursed as if he had spent all his life at sea.

There was a Fellow of my own college who accepted a valuable living in the Fens. Soon after he had taken up his residence there, I had occasion to call upon him. He seemed very depressed, which I thought might be due

to his dreary surroundings ; but it turned out that it was due to a sad lack of response, on the part of his parishioners, to his efforts to move with the times and do something to interest them on week-day evenings.

“ Yes,” he said, “ soon after I came here, hoping to interest the people in their leisure hours, I started some lectures. Only one person came, and that was the schoolmaster ; and he only came once.”

“ What was the subject ? ” I inquired.

“ Hebrew,” he answered, with a deep sigh.

But to return to clerical meetings. The only ones that I can remember that were at all lively were in a rural deanery in which the three parties in the Church were each represented by a militant champion.

First of all, we had a Modernist—I think I am right in so describing him, but I believe he called himself a Liberal Churchman. He was a smart young man from Oxford. He flouted clerical conventions in the matter of dress and attended Chapter in a check suit and, as he was a bit of a Socialist, he often wore a red tie.

Then there was an Advanced Anglo-Catholic, of somewhat cadaverous appearance, who came in his cassock ; a very wonderful garment with tiny buttons of some metallic substance all down the front and a cape which was tied on

with a broad black ribbon in a most impressive bow, which made him look like a dignitary of the Roman Church. He was very proud of that cassock and would tell you, if you complimented him on it, that it was made for him by some Sisters of the "Roman obedience," who measured him for it through a grille, or something of the sort, which accounted for its not being quite such a good fit as he could have desired.

And, last but not least, we had an aggressive Protestant. A tall, sallow, melancholy-looking man with side-whiskers and "a rattle-snake eye,"—I will not add "decidedly bad," but it gleamed with fanaticism. He wore a large white tie which was a challenge to everybody. It was not like the white tie of my college tutor, neat, unobtrusive, tidy, expressive of his mild and tolerant outlook on life, but it straggled all over his chest, and its very ends were controversial.

"When the Modernist, in his best Balliol manner, remarked: "I suppose we are all agreed that the Gospel of St. John is not historical, and that the story of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection belongs to the poetry rather than the history of Christianity," you could hear the mutterings of the storm which would break when he resumed his seat. He was assailed from all sides with an amount

of scornful indignation, which did great credit to the orthodoxy of his brother-clerics and made up for their imperfect knowledge of the matters in dispute. If vehement denunciation could have crushed him, he ought to have been reduced to powder. As it was, the heaviest blows of his adversaries left him quite unshaken. He was perfectly cool and collected, abominably polite, a past-master in the Socratic method, and extensively and accurately acquainted with his subject. He not only held his own but always contrived, in the most gentlemanly fashion in the world, to put his opponents in the wrong. When he spoke lightly of St. Thomas Aquinas (with whose writings he was well acquainted) and even dared to suggest that that great Saint and Doctor did not know everything, and in some matters was quite in error, I was really afraid that the gentleman in the cassock would relieve his outraged feelings by a physical assault on the speaker. But even if he made us very angry he did us all a lot of good. He set our stagnant brains moving and sent us to our book-shelves to procure ammunition with which to annihilate him on some future occasion. But when the occasion arrived the results were usually the same; he was always one or two points ahead of us.



But, though our Modernist friend stirred us up, the real excitement began when the Catholic and Protestant champions stepped into the ring. There was, on the part of the spectators, breathless expectation mingled with some alarm, for we never knew what might happen when their blood was fairly up. There was no preliminary shaking of hands. They were both much too honest for any such pretence of goodwill. But they rushed at each other's throats like a couple of angry dogs as soon as the bone of contention appeared. They were fairly evenly matched. The Catholic champion was better trained, had more ringcraft, was quicker on his feet, and was decidedly the superior boxer ; but his opponent was a more determined fighter and got in some heavy blows which sometimes sent his adversary staggering to the ropes, though he never succeeded in knocking him out.

It was as much as the Rural Dean could do to keep the ring, and it generally ended in the combatants being separated through the intervention of their brethren, who seemed to know when the danger-round had been reached.

These bouts were most entertaining, and, I may add, instructive. Anglo-Catholics labour under the delusion that they are the only true representatives of the English Church and



that all who do not belong to them are either hopelessly prejudiced, wickedly perverse, invincibly ignorant, or wilfully dishonest. As a matter of fact, they do not represent the Church of England any more than do the Low Church party, and not so much as the Moderate party, which probably numbers about seventy-five or eighty per cent of existing Church people. By dint of hard fighting they have won a foothold for themselves within the comprehensive pale of the Established Church, and that is all. I am sure some of them will not agree with this, but there is no escaping from the urgency of visible facts. For example the Rev. Ignatius Chasuble is permitted, with the tacit consent of his Bishop, who is too feeble to stop him, to teach Tredentine doctrine and to use the full ceremonial prescribed by the Congregations of Rites. He vacates the benefice and the Rev. Ridley Latimer, who denounces his teaching as corrupt and superstitious and his ceremonial as idolatrous, is appointed in his place. In the eye of the law both of Church and State he is as good and sound a representative of the Church of England as his predecessor.

This is a fact which Anglo-Catholics contrive to forget and do not like to be reminded of. It will be time enough for them to claim to

represent the Church of England when they have captured Her, and they are still a very long way from doing that. It is true that they have "boosted" themselves (if I may be pardoned the use of the term) a good deal lately by means of congresses, pilgrimages and the mission of the Fiery Cross, but, in spite of the artificial heat generated by these and other expedients, it is doubtful whether they are really making any headway. I will yield to none in my sincere admiration for the piety, self-sacrifice, and devotion, of some individual members of the party. If any men could win over people to their way of thinking, they could. But it has been truly said, "Religious movements have the fate of melodies, which once set afloat in the world are taken up by all sorts of instruments, some of them woefully coarse, feeble, or out of tune, until people are in danger of crying out that the melody itself is detestable." It is these inferior instruments who retard the progress of the movement. For every convert made by the more enlightened members of the party, they prevent hundreds from joining it.

Dean Inge has said that "the Church of England represents the religion of the English people as no other body can represent it." The religion of the English people is definite

about practical duties but nebulous about doctrines. If there is one thing a typical Englishman clings to more tenaciously than any other, it is what has been called his "unlimited right of private haziness" in matters of religious belief; he claims "a human being's privileges to fashion his inner life for himself." This is the rock, to use a somewhat paradoxical illustration, on which Anglo-Catholicism will shatter itself. Evangelicism, which was quite as fervent and far more widely and influentially supported, was wrecked on it in the last century.

I am aware that Anglo-Catholics have a supreme contempt, which they share with their Evangelical brethren, for the religion of the ordinary English Churchman. But it is not by any means such an amorphous thing as they imagine. He accepts as certain a few elementary truths, which he has tested in practice and tries to live by. He receives with loyal but passive acquiescence the traditional beliefs in which he has been brought up, but does not give them much thought nor follow out logically all their implications. His nature is not "ardent, theoretic and intellectually consequent," and illogical compromises on these and other matters suit his mental habits. As for the things that theologians quarrel over,

he neither knows nor cares anything about them, and thinks that controversies on these subsidiary matters are mere waste of time when there is no authority to decide who is right and who is wrong. He would, I think, agree with the author of "Father and Son," that religion in any violent form (whether Anglo-Catholicism or Evangelicalism) is not a valuable or desirable adjunct to human life. that "it divides heart from heart. It sets up a vain chimerical ideal, in the barren pursuit of which all the tender, indulgent affections, all the genial play of life, all the exquisite pleasures and soft resignations of the body, all that enlarges and calms the soul, are exchanged for what is harsh, void and negative. It encourages a stern and ignorant spirit of condemnation; it throws altogether out of gear the healthy movement of the conscience; it invents virtues which are sterile and cruel; it invents sins which are no sins at all; but which darken the heaven of innocent joy with futile clouds of remorse."

Anglo-Catholics will no doubt indignantly deny that this is the effect of their teaching. But people who have lived under the same roof with any serious-minded member, or members, of the party will, I think, be disposed to admit the general truth of the charge, even

although in some particular cases it may not be justified.

The real danger which threatens the Church of England at the present time is not the spread of Anglo-Catholicism or Modernism, to which a limit is set by the mentality of English people, but the machinery which has lately been set up with the object of giving Her greater freedom in the management of Her own affairs. This is the outcome of what is known as the Life and Liberty Movement, and of all forms of war hysteria this movement was perhaps the most stupid and the most mischievous. The behaviour of its supporters resembled that of Mr. Tupman, on the occasion when Mr. Pickwick fell through the ice when sliding. It will be remembered that while Old Wardle and Sam Weller were trying to rescue him, Mr. Tupman, by way of letting everybody know that a catastrophe had occurred, ran off across the country screaming "Fire!" with all his might. So, during the earlier days of the War, while most of the clergy were quietly doing their duty—comforting the bereaved, cheering the despondent, and ministering to the wounded—the champions of "Life and Liberty" were rushing up and down the country screaming at the top of their voices, "The Church has failed" and "Something ought to be done."



Nearly all of them were ecclesiastical politicians bitten with the craze of modern democracy, who saw in the state of things brought about by the War an opportunity for the reconstitution of the Church on a democratic basis. As events proved, they were entirely out of touch with the majority of Church people, but they were noisy and persistent and gained the ear of the authorities. Just as Mr. Tupman frightened old Mrs. Wardle into a fit, so these alarmists stampeded the Bishops into holding the National Mission of Repentance and Hope. Something had to be done ! There never was a more lamentable fiasco than this mission, or a more distressing exhibition of the futility and ineptitude of the Episcopal bench. The Mission had no appreciable effect on the nation, for most people were far too busy and preoccupied by the war to take any notice of it ; and it had little, if any, effect on the Church. Nevertheless it was used by the advocates of ecclesiastical democracy to push their policy. The revival of spiritual life which the Mission was alleged to have brought about was made the basis of a claim for greater freedom for the Church in the management of Her affairs.

The Coalition Government, infected with the shallow optimism which talked about



making this country "a land fit for heroes to live in," and the like, was in the mood for granting anything to anybody who made a plausible demand. The result was the passing of the Enabling Act, which created the National Assembly of the Church of England and established Parochial Church Councils, for which, as the event showed, there was no popular demand whatever. All the more undesirable features of our parliamentary system were adopted and, as far as possible, everything was brought into conformity with secular methods and ideals. This new machinery has been set up side by side with the old, which has been allowed to remain almost intact, and the result is muddle and overlapping.

The constitution of the Church of England is based on canonical principles which, whatever they may be, are not democratic. No doubt the old machinery needed overhauling and repairing, but it was perfectly sound and, in proper hands, quite capable of doing its work. What has been done is to erect a badly-constructed and cumbersome "donkey-engine" which, so far from accelerating the progress of the ship, is more likely to sink it.

After the high-falutin talk about liberty, all that has been accomplished is slightly to loosen the cords which bound the Church, but the State

can tighten them again whenever it thinks fit. As for life, if life consists in holding meetings, in incessant discussions, in forming committees, in publishing reports, in filling up forms, and the like, then the life of the Church has indeed been quickened by the changes that have been made. But these activities are, for the most part, about as valuable as the gyrations of a squirrel in a cage. So far they have produced nothing more important than a pension scheme which will come into operation twenty years hence, and a Dilapidations Act which is probably one of the most complicated, badly-drafted Acts ever put on the Statute Book, and likely to aggravate the very evil it is intended to cure.

From the point of view of the clergy, perhaps the most serious thing is that nearly every piece of legislation inaugurated and carried through by the National Assembly imposes some fresh financial burden upon them, which their increasing poverty renders them less and less able to sustain.

The National Assembly is quite aware of this, but not in the least concerned about it. This is not surprising, for when it might have done something to relieve the hardships of the clergy it was guilty of a mean betrayal. Those who wish to know the facts should consult the

articles which appeared in *Truth* on the subject, which have never been answered, and which convict high officials of the Church of conduct that would be regarded as extremely dishonourable by decent business men.\*

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\* Vide *Truth*. March 10th, 17th, 24th, 1920; January 12th, 19th, July 6th, September 28th, November 9th, 16th, 1921, and December 1st, 1922.

## XI

### SOCIALISM AND ANTI-SOCIALISM

**A**LL that the Church of England could give me when I returned from abroad was a tiny hamlet in the Midlands, of about a hundred souls. There are many such parishes in that part of the country; within a radius of two and a half miles of mine there were four with an aggregate population of under a thousand served by four clergymen. Except on Sundays there was practically nothing to do. My flock consisted of four farmers and their families, and the labourers on the farms. They were seldom ill; I had a funeral about once a year, a baptism once in two years, and a wedding once in three years. As the parish was very compact I could visit every house in an afternoon.

I therefore decided to take up some outside work. I was rather at a loss what to do. The ordinary extra-parochial work—religious inspection of schools, temperance work and the like—did not appeal to me and I had no aptitude for it; after being absent from England for

nearly eight years I had lost touch with English Church life. I had always been interested in social and economic questions and, rightly or wrongly, regarded Socialism as one of the most insidious and dangerous evils of the day, so when the Anti-Socialist Union was started I joined it and became one of its lecturers and speakers.

It was a useful organization and I worked for it until the outbreak of the war. Being within easy reach of London, Birmingham, Leicester, Sheffield and other large towns, I could leave home on Monday and return on Friday or Saturday. I began by lecturing at various places to the classes for speakers. It was interesting and congenial work. The speakers were drawn from all ranks of society and included the son of a peer and the keeper of a sweet-stuff stall outside Victoria Station. There was a wonderful spirit of good fellowship among them, and they were a remarkable set of men, many of them having had experiences which were quite out of the common. The training was as thorough as it could be under the circumstances. Lectures were given on economics and on special subjects such as Marx's *Capital*, Socialist Fallacies, Labour, Production, and the National Income. Before a speaker could appear on the platform of the

Union he had to pass an examination in these subjects, and to prove his ability not only to speak but to hold his own when interrupted and heckled. The neophyte would mount the platform and begin his speech, but he was not allowed to go on for more than a few minutes before he was bombarded with interjections, irrelevant questions and personal criticisms, from the other students, who, for the time being, assumed the character of militant Socialists, and used with great effect their own experiences at the street corners where they had been through a similar ordeal. If the speaker showed that he could keep his head and his temper he was considered qualified to face the real music.

We had some very noisy and very merry evenings in the lecture room at Victoria Street, engaged in this kind of drill, which was a useful training for the difficult work in hand. It was work which kept the mind actively employed. Every question of any importance asked by Socialists at our meetings was carefully examined and discussed with a view to finding the most effective answer; and, as these questions came round again and again, like recurring decimals, our speakers acquired considerable skill and readiness in answering them. The Union accumulated a mass of information in every branch of the subject, and had a useful



reference library; we were able to refute Socialists with facts and figures and to expose their fallacies in a way which they often found most disconcerting.

When, owing to the cessation of the classes, my services were no longer required as a lecturer, I became a speaker. I must confess that at first I did not like the idea of speaking out of doors. I had never done anything of the kind before; one had to face hostile audiences, and the conditions, owing to the noise of the traffic, were often very difficult. But the reality was not half so dreadful as I thought it would be. My first venture in this line was at Bradford—that veritable hotbed of Socialism—on the piece of ground known as the People's Forum, where meetings of all kinds were held every night. The audience numbered about three or four hundred and was a typical north-country crowd. I was in clerical attire—so many of my brother clergy support the Labour movement that I saw no reason why I should be ashamed of taking the other side—and I hardly expected to get a hearing. Much to my surprise, I was allowed to proceed with scarcely any interruption, and after the first feeling of strangeness had passed off I found speaking quite easy. Addressing a crowd like this is much more interesting than preaching.

There is nothing more cramping than an ordinary pulpit and nothing more uninspiring than an ordinary congregation. Out of doors, talking on matters in which people are really interested, one feels in touch with one's audience in a way one seldom, if ever, feels in church; and this human contact is a kind of inspiration.

My experience has been that Yorkshire and Lancashire people will always give you a decent hearing if you put your case fairly and treat them with courtesy. What they dislike is any assumption of superiority and any attempt to lecture them. A brother clergyman who sometimes spoke with me—a really good fellow, though absolutely devoid of tact—used to infuriate them by talking to them as if they were a lot of Sunday School children; and one night, at Leeds, he made them so mad that they pulled him off the platform. Of course there was trouble at times. In the Attercliffe division of Sheffield—one of the roughest quarters of the city—a gang of hooligans tried to run the lorry from which I was speaking down a steep hill; it was good-tempered horseplay, but it might have resulted in a nasty smash. Fortunately the police arrived just in time to stop them. At Leeds an anarchist tried to stab me in the back, and at Norwich, which is the roughest place I

know of, I was knocked off the platform. I also had a nasty time in Hyde Park on the only occasion I spoke there: every bully and swell mobsman in London seemed to have been engaged by the Socialists to break up the meeting. But with these few exceptions I always got a decent hearing. When, as at Leicester, a series of meetings was held on the same pitch the crowd might be hostile at first, but afterwards became quite friendly; and it happened more than once, at the end of a campaign, that a vote of thanks was proposed and carried with acclamation.

There is something particularly attractive, after the stilted and somewhat artificial conditions under which one preaches in church, in talking in a free-and-easy fashion to a mixed crowd gathered in the streets. They would stand round the waggonette or lorry, in the dim lamplight, all sorts and conditions of men: the artisan, the collier, the mechanic, the clerk, the small shopkeeper, the professional man, every one of them keenly interested and for the most part good, honest fellows. Some of them bore in their faces the marks of self-indulgence and dissipation, some of keen intellectual power, some of innate refinement, some had the far-away look of the mystic and the dreamer (these were usually Socialists);

and nearly all of them, in one way or another, showed signs of the hard struggle of modern life. What impressed me most was their sporting spirit, their good-humour, their honesty, their freedom from affectation, and their common sense. I believe that sense of justice, which is in all men, has been less vitiated in the working-classes than in any other class in the country.

Question time was, of course, the most interesting feature in these gatherings. And whenever I saw that the people were impatient to put their questions, I cut my speech short and let them do so as quickly as possible. I stipulated, first, that only one question should be put at a time; secondly, that I should be allowed to answer it without interruption; and thirdly, that, whether they agreed with it or not, my answer should be accepted without discussion. These conditions were always agreed to and fairly well kept, although in the excitement of the moment some people when they had received their answer were disposed to argue and make speeches. Now and again I had questions bearing on the scientific theories of Socialism. Once I was cross-examined for half an hour by a collier on Marx's *Capital*—he seemed to know the book by heart—and sometimes I had

metaphysical questions put to me such as "Explain the difference between personality and individuality."

But, as a general rule, the questions were of a very simple character, and had reference to the practical grievances under which the workers suffered in regard to wages, hours and housing conditions. My impression was that few, if any, of them knew or cared anything about Socialism as such. What they were out for was higher wages, shorter hours, and better conditions of life generally; and they seemed to think that they could get these things by Socialism. Hence the line I always took was to try and show them that, under Socialism, they would be no better off than they were at present; that they would have no more liberty, no more money, and no more comfort, and that unless they could guarantee a greater increase in production under that system they would be worse off in every respect. I always found this line of argument effective; at any rate they always listened attentively to what I had to say on these points. It is a mistake to attack Socialism, as its opponents sometimes do, on moral and religious grounds. No doubt Atheism and Free Love are the logical outcome of the system, and that Schöffle was not far wrong when he said that "All



religion is fanatically hated by many Socialists"; but the ordinary British Socialist does not trouble his head much with these questions. If he does think them out and arrive at the conclusions reached by consistent thinkers like Belfort Bax, and others, however profoundly one may disagree with him, one is bound to admit that he is more honest than many professed Christians, who lead a life of practical Atheism and whose morals are those of the poultry-yard. It is sickening to hear men of this type denouncing Socialism as immoral and irreligious.

Some amusing incidents occurred at the meetings. We made it a strict rule—for reasons which I need not enter into—never to allow Socialists to use our platform. I remember, at one meeting a gaunt, wild-eyed, fanatical-looking Socialist clambering up on to the lorry and seating himself on a chair, saying :

" I am coming up whether you allow it or not."

It was while we were taking questions that this happened, and my colleague—an Irishman—caught hold of him and the chair, and pitched them into the crowd, saying in the most unconcerned manner :

" The next question, please."

On another occasion an " intellectual " put a question something like this :



“If, hypothetically, the Isle of Wight were a Socialist community, and if, hypothetically, a system of Socialist production were established there, how, hypothetically, would it affect production in this country?”

To which my Irish friend promptly replied :

“I’ll be hypothetically damned if I can tell you !”

Very often our own supporters gave us more trouble than our opponents. I remember one ardent Individualist, very much the worse for drink, who made speaking difficult by his continued and loudly-expressed assurance of his profound respect for “the cloth.”

“I’ll tell you this,” he said, “if Socialists were to cover groun’ with silver and gold I wouldn’t stoop to pick it up.” In attempting to give a practical illustration of this he fell flat on his face and couldn’t get up again without the help of some friendly Socialists who were standing by.

There is a good deal of “sloppy sentiment” in connection with Socialism, and I fancy the ordinary wage earner, who is not without a sense of humour, must feel a kind of amused contempt for those who, for political purposes, are always prating about his miserable condition. Whether, when they make statements like this, they are telling deliberate untruths

or whether, like Mr. Vincey in *Middlemarch*, they have "strong impressions, unmodified by detail," it is impossible to say, but I rather suspect the latter. Some people, of course, never let facts stand in the way of their assertions, but in this particular matter nobody seems to have troubled to investigate the facts. The result is that there is a general belief that the workers are a downtrodden, unhappy class, robbed of the best part of their earnings by greedy and dishonest capitalists, and that nothing but an entire reconstruction of our whole economic and industrial system can remedy the evils under which they suffer.

So far from Society being divided into two classes, the rich and the poor, capitalists and workers, the actual state of things is entirely different. There are about ten million families in the Kingdom. Of these, at one end of the scale, there are about a million families which have a family income of £500 per annum and upwards—those with over £5000 per annum being a small proportion of the whole number. Then come seven million families, comprising the wage-earning class, who have a family income which averages between £200 and £250 per annum; and, at the bottom of the social scale, are two million families living on or below the poverty line. It is these last (whose

economic condition may be due to the loss of the bread-winner, sickness, intemperance, incapacity, idleness or improvidence) who are exploited by the Socialists and held up as typical representatives of the working-class !

As a matter of fact, the working-class, in which I include head workers as well as hand workers, forms the great bulk of the population and is, on the whole, comfortable and prosperous. It takes three-fourths of the national income in wages and salaries, in addition to a considerable amount in indirect benefits ; its savings are now probably £4,000,000,000—double what they were twenty years ago—and it is the only class in the country that can afford to spend a quarter of its income on pleasure and amusement. I deplore, as much as any Socialist, the unhappy conditions of members of this class who from one cause or another have fallen below the poverty line, but why do not the more prosperous workers do something to help them ? They have only to *halve* their expenditure on drink, betting, tobacco, horse-racing, football matches, seaside excursions, country outings, music halls and cinemas, and ample funds would be available for the relief of the poverty and misery of which we hear so much.

The workers themselves know this quite

well, though they do not care to be reminded of it. They are human like the rest of us, and prefer to shift their burdens on to other people's shoulders. The property-owning and professional classes are being rated and taxed almost out of existence in order that Lancashire colliers and mill operatives may have more money to spend at Blackpool and the Isle of Man, and to supply thousands of men and women, in factories and shops, with funds to invest with bookmakers and other people who cater for their amusement. Whether under Socialism they would become more unselfish, I am very much inclined to doubt. You might change our social system, but you would not change human nature; and human nature seems to be the rock on which all experiments in Socialism are destined to be shattered.

As for Socialism being any cure for poverty and destitution, the following words of Mr. Sidney Webb are illuminating. "You may often hear," he said, "a crude and ignorant Socialist declare, let us have a Socialist State and all will be well. I want to say that if you mean by a Socialist State government ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, that fact alone would not mean the prevention of destitution."

## XII

### LONDON IN THE SEVENTIES

**M**Y early training was for the Bar, and I spent a year in London reading law before going up to Cambridge. The London I knew nearly fifty years ago was the London of Dickens' later novels (I well remember his death in 1870) and, to a less extent, the London of *The Newcomes*. That is to say, it was a straggling and rather dirty city, with narrow streets and appalling slums, the business part of which was in marked contrast to the West End.

Temple Bar, which blocked the middle of the Strand, was a kind of dividing line between the two; when you passed West of that structure you were supposed to enter the region of gaiety and fashion. Greater London, as it is now called, was not in existence. There were green fields in the front and at the back of my father's house at Clapham. Places like Enfield, Edmonton, Finchley and Muswell Hill were in quite rural surroundings, and an old parishioner of mine can remember shooting

pheasants in the neighbourhood of Edgware Road !

The London Streets were paved with cobble stones and very badly lit by gas lamps, which were placed so far apart that they seemed to increase the surrounding darkness. The means of getting from one part of the town to another were limited to the Underground Railway—which had not long been opened and was regarded as one of the wonders of the age—and the old knife-board omnibuses, drawn by two horses. I shall never forget the smoke, stench and sulphurous fumes of the former, or the difficulty of ascending and descending the latter ; you had to clamber up by an iron ladder, and as the rungs were nearly two feet from each other it required no little agility to do it. There were, of course, cabs in plenty. The four-wheeler—commonly called a “growler”—often a very fusty conveyance with damp, moth-eaten cushions and dirty straw on the floor ; and the hansom, which was usually quite a smart turn-out, with a showy horse and a driver in sporting attire, with a white hat, and a flower in his buttonhole.

The cabbies at that time were a distinct feature of London life and had not a few of the characteristics of Sam Weller ; they were a bright, cheery, fresh-coloured, good-humoured



set of men, with a wonderful gift of repartee, and were ready to use their fists whenever occasion required. There were still one or two coaches on the road and I believe I travelled by the last of them, which ran from the *Black Bull* in Holborn to Great Missenden in Buckinghamshire, through a stretch of country which was quite out of the track of the railways. My brother had a place in that neighbourhood, which, although within thirty miles of London, was fifteen miles from a railway station.

The end of the seventies was a transition period; the mid-Victorian Era was passing and the new order of things was just beginning to take shape. Old gentlemen could still be met who wore beaver hats, cut-away coats, and stocks; and old ladies with side ringlets, "poke" bonnets (I think that was what they were called) and voluminous gowns. The modern craze for "Social Service," which is now in grave danger of *being overdone*, was practically unknown. The middle classes were serious, highly respectable, and perhaps a little self-satisfied. They heard so often that they were the backbone of the country that it is not surprising that they thought rather well of themselves. The aristocracy were more exclusive than they are to-day, and a Lord

was a great personage in the eyes of the commonalty. The lower orders, as they were then called, were a much more sturdy set of people than they are now. Their standard of living was lower and they had more hardships and privations. But they faced these things in a far more cheerful and optimistic spirit than they do at the present time. I suppose the truth is they were not so conscious of their privations and, because of this, did not often complain. It was the time of large families, though what has been called the "swarming period" was drawing to a close. I was the youngest of nine, and families of ten or a dozen were quite common. Living was cheaper and less money was spent in luxuries and amusements. Much more importance was attached to family life than now, and people spent more time in their homes. The fifth commandment had not been cut out of the decalogue. The father was the head of the household, and a good wife prided herself on her obedience to her husband. All this must seem rather strange to the present generation. I am speaking of what was the rule, but even then there was a feminist movement and there were strenuous advocates of "Women's Rights." These people were looked upon as freaks, and I think Queen Victoria

voiced the popular sentiment when she said they wanted a good whipping.

The young were kept in subjection. Girls were seldom allowed out alone, and never went to a dance or other entertainment without a chaperon. As to lunching and dining with men as girls do now, except, of course, in the case of engaged couples, such a thing was almost unheard of and would have been considered most improper and ill-bred, as would a great many other things—such as smoking, drinking cocktails, swearing, telling smutty stories, and wearing male attire—such as is the habit of the up-to-date young woman of to-day. Certainly there were girls then who did things of the kind, as anyone may learn by reading Mrs. Lynn Linton's articles on "The Girl of the Period" which appeared in the *Saturday Review*. But they were a very small minority and were only to be found among the "fast set" in the Upper Classes.

I should not like my readers to carry away the impression that London life was dull at this time. Certainly amusements were not organized on the elaborate scale that they are now, and people did not make such a business of pleasure. They worked harder, but I do not think they enjoyed themselves less. As far as I can remember, there were

not more than a dozen theatres in London fifty years ago, and I can only recollect four music-halls—the Oxford, the Pavilion, the Holborn and the Metropolitan—though I believe there were one or two more. They were conducted in a free-and-easy fashion; refreshments were served to people in their seats, so that they could enjoy their drink while listening to the entertainment. A chairman sat at a table, facing the audience, in front of the platform, and announced the names of the performers when their turns came: in fact, everything was homely and sociable, rather like “The Haunt” in Thackeray’s novels, but a little more formal. The other places of amusement were Hengler’s Circus, Mrs. German Reed’s “Illustrations,” in which Corney Grain and Arthur Cecil took part, and, I think, Messrs. Maskelyne & Cook’s entertainment.

I can hardly realize now that I saw most of the leading actors and actresses of that day. Some of them, of course, I have forgotten, but others—the Bancrofts, Irving, Toole, George Honey, the Terrys, George Grossmith and Barrington—I shall never forget. Were there giants on the earth in those days, or is the idea that there were one of the delusions of advancing years? I

don't know. I have not been more than half a dozen times to the theatre in the last forty years, so I cannot make comparisons. There may be men and women on the stage to-day in every way equal to those of the days of my youth. But I cannot help thinking that a man must have very great gifts to be finer than Irving at his best, or more amusing than Toole and Grossmith. I saw the latter in "The Sorcerer" as John Wellington Wells, and how well I recollect the roars of laughter when he went round and round the stage squatting on his heels, holding a teapot and uttering incantations: he looked exactly as if he were on wheels. There is one thing at least I am certain of, that there is nothing to-day in the comic opera line which comes within measurable distance of Gilbert and Sullivan's productions. Nor is the modern Revue so amusing as the old-fashioned Burlesque of which the Gaiety was the home. This recalls the name of Nelly Farren, one of the best of women and one of the cleverest, brightest and most attractive of actresses. I wonder whether she has her equal; or whether there is to-day a more graceful dancer than Kate Vaughan, or a more dainty and charming *comédienne* than Connie Gilchrist? I suppose every generation has its own type of beauty



and some of the women who were most admired in the seventies might not be thought much of now. And yet, again, I cannot help feeling that Mrs. Langtry and Mrs. Cornwallis West could hold their own with any woman to-day ; and that Florence St. John, who used to act with Marius at the Strand, Violet Cameron and Maude Branscombe would be difficult to surpass, if not to match. The latter had the most glorious eyes of any woman I have ever seen, and she was very much photographed. She came down to Cambridge while I was there, and her portraits—taken by a firm whose trade name was “ Moira ”—were liberally displayed all over the town. Apropos of this, there is a good story told of the celebrated Dr. Thompson, the Master of Trinity, who is reported to have delivered himself in the common room after dinner one night as follows :

“ As I was walking down King’s Parade this afternoon, I noticed in a shop window the photograph of a young woman, taken in a variety of different attitudes and a multiplicity of costumes. Her name is Moira ; she is, I presume, a courtesan ! ”

A night out in London in those days was, I suppose, very much like a night out now. You dined with a friend either at the Criterion or Romano’s, or the Holborn, or Kettner’s—



there were about as many places to dine at as there were theatres—then you went to the Gaiety, or, if your tastes were more cultivated, to the Lyceum or the Court. You dropped into the Alhambra for the ballet, or went to the Pavilion or the Oxford to hear Arthur Roberts or the Great Macdermott, or some other popular star, and you usually finished up with supper at Scott's or Evans'.

Arthur Roberts was excruciatingly funny. I say excruciatingly because he made you laugh till you fairly ached. His facial contortions were extraordinary, and he had only to smile and look round the room and the whole audience was convulsed with laughter. If I had been in London the other day I should certainly have gone to his Benefit, which I rejoice to hear was quite successful, for I feel grateful to him for all the innocent enjoyment he gave me in the days of my youth. They tell me he pleads guilty to being seventy, but I think he must be nearer eighty. I don't know how many of his generation still survive on the music-hall stage, but I do know I should love to see them all again.

In the seventies, among the more priggish and pharisaic section of the middle classes, music-hall artists were looked upon as rather disreputable; to-day, I am glad to say, we

value their services, and every one, from Royalty downwards, attends their performances. And why not? What if the jokes *are* sometimes a little broad? I can only say that clean-minded, healthy people can afford to laugh at things which cause the prurient-minded to blush. There is one text in Scripture of which some people need to be reminded, "Unto the pure all things are pure." Sir James Stephen in his "Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography" tells us how shocked he was at some Dominicans for making merry over the sins and iniquities of the Popes. He couldn't understand it at all; it seemed to betray a light-hearted indifference to morality which, Agnostic as he was, he thought quite deplorable. In so clever a man this was very stupid. He ought to have known that it is those who are really pure in heart, and detached from the world, who see the humorous side of man's sins and weaknesses, and without any fear of compromising themselves can give vent to their amusement.

Dean Inge says it is a mistake to suppose that the Deity has no sense of humour. If He has, then, if I may say so without irreverence, He must often smile at the ridiculous situations into which men contrive to get themselves when pursuing their evil ways; at the airs they

give themselves as they strut across the tiny stage of this earthly life, and, it may be, at their blundering efforts to do right—as a mother smiles at her child's first attempts to walk.

There is one thing, at least, in which London to-day is better than the London of the seventies—vice and profligacy do not flaunt themselves so openly in the streets. Those who remember the old days will recall the scene between midnight and about 3 a.m., when hundreds of prostitutes, blacklegs, bullies, racing men, gilded youths and old roués used to promenade past the Criterion, down Lower Regent Street and back up the Haymarket, exchanging all sorts of *badinage*—some of it far from delicate—and occasionally varying the proceedings with a fight, in which even the ladies sometimes took part. I can hardly refrain from smiling when pious prelates deplore the degeneracy of the times and the iniquities of night clubs. One would imagine that such places had never been heard of before. I can only say that in the late seventies anyone who felt so disposed could dance, drink and gamble till daybreak or after, in a hundred different resorts, and I fancy that the dissipations of to-day are mild compared with what took place then among those who “went the pace.”

Young people often ask me about the changes

in London during the last forty years, and the best answer I can think of must be given in the form of a parable. There was an old-established eating-house, if I may call it so, in the Strand noted for its good English fare; especially for its saddles of mutton, which were quite celebrated. When I first remember it, it was a homely place, furnished with old-fashioned cubicles, and the appointments and service were rather rough-and-ready, but quite nice and comfortable. I visited it the other day for the first time since the early eighties, and found it had been transformed into a large, handsome, up-to-date restaurant, with all the modern improvements, utterly unrecognizable as the place I knew in the days of my youth. Yet it was the same place, run by the same firm, and, if everything else had changed, providing the same fare as of old. The change in this establishment is typical of the change that has taken place in London itself. During the last forty years London has been enlarged, beautified and improved; it has been provided with all modern conveniences for locomotion and communication; it is a finer, grander and smarter place than it was when I first knew it; and yet it is the same old London, and provides much the same fare as before, only on a more elaborate scale.

The standard of life is much higher for all classes, and people are quieter, better-mannered, and I think more humane and kindly than they used to be. There is far less violence and drunkenness than in the old days. To-day you can walk from the Marble Arch to Liverpool Street Station without meeting a drunken man or seeing a street-fight; you couldn't do that forty years ago. Human nature, of course, always remains the same, whatever alterations may take place in its surroundings. We are neither better nor worse than we were, though we have changed the fashion of our sins and our style of sinning. In these and other respects our taste has improved, whatever may be said about our morals.

Perhaps the attractions of modern London do not appeal to me so much as its homely pleasures and rougher and more virile life in those bygone days; but I was twenty then and I am, alas! in my sixty-sixth year now, and this, no doubt, makes a difference. Unlike the curate in *The Private Secretary*, I do like London—"Dear city of Cecrops"—new or old, there is no place in the world to equal it; and I should love to spend my declining days within its hospitable walls instead of in exile on the borders of Dartmoor.

### XIII

#### LAW AND LAWYERS

**A**T the risk of being thought priggish, I wish to say that I was far more interested in my future profession than in amusements, and that I spent a good deal more time in the Law Courts than at theatres and music-halls.

I think I heard most of the leading men at the Bar. There were still some members of the Ancient College of Serjeants in practice, and I well remember Serjeant Parry, the father of the present judge, and Serjeant Ballantine. Often have I seen the latter, looking as if he had not been to bed, cramming up his case in consultation with his junior, five or ten minutes before the opening of the court, and then conducting it with a perfect mastery of detail as if he had spent hours in preparing it. He was one of the most skilful cross-examiners of his day and knew not only what questions to put, but what is quite as important, though often overlooked, what questions to avoid. For instance, I once heard



him cross-examine a bookmaker, whom he very cleverly pinned down to swearing that on a particular day he was at Brighton. Ballantine led him up to it by three distinct paths, making it perfectly clear that the man could not have been elsewhere on the date in question. He then produced a telegram which the witness had sent that day from Glasgow. Here he stopped. It was explained to me afterwards that he might have damaged his case had he gone further into the matter, and was well aware that there were reasons why the other side could not press for explanations in re-examination. It was one of those fine strokes for which Ballantine was noted and which won him many a verdict.

Sir John Holker—"Sleepy Jack" as he was called—was another prominent figure at the Bar. There was something about his slow, deliberate, soothing way of speaking which was very convincing. I was in court when he moved for a writ of *certiorari* for a new inquest in the Bravo case. The application was a very unusual one and the judges at first seemed rather inclined to refuse it, but in his easy, persuasive way he talked them completely round and got what he wanted. Sir John was Attorney-General under Lord Beaconsfield's administration, and Sir Hardinge Giffard,

afterwards Lord Halsbury, was Solicitor-General. He was known as "the great unseatable." He was defeated when he put up for re-election after his appointment, and I believe he fought seven or eight elections before he succeeded in getting returned again to Parliament. He was a sound lawyer and a most successful advocate. He had an almost uncanny gift of spotting the weak point in his adversary's case and hammering away at it until he knocked the case to pieces. I met him a few years before his death, when he must have been over ninety, but he hardly looked any older than he did when I first saw him in the Law Courts.

It is difficult to realize that Lord Birkenhead, Sir John Simon and Sir Douglas Hogg were little boys in the nursery at this time, and that Sir Edward Clarke was a promising junior, who was already beginning to make a name for himself by his successful defences in the Great Detective case and in the Penge murder case. He was known in London as "the fighter," and if a verdict could be won by eloquent pleading he seldom failed to secure it. In my humble judgment, his great rival, Lord Russell of Killowen, was a more able advocate and his superior in point of generalship. Russell's skill in the management of a case was absolutely

consummate. Both these distinguished men came to the front long after my time, but I believe Russell had then taken silk.

Among the leading counsel at that time, in criminal cases, were H. B. Poland, who is still alive and was reputed to know more about indictments than any man living, Montagu Williams (about whom I shall have a word to say presently), Douglas Straight, Matthews, Grain and Beasley, in common law cases, Benjamin, Herschell, Coleridge and Cohen, a great man in mercantile cases; in chancery cases, Napier Higgins, who was supposed to make the largest income of anyone in the profession, Channel, who hadn't an *h* in his composition, Karslake, Pearson; in railway compensation cases, Pope, whose physical bulk was enormous; and in ecclesiastical cases, Dr. Stephens and his namesake, Sir Fitz James Stephens; and there were others whose names I have forgotten, but well known in their day.

Of the above, Benjamin and Montagu Williams were the most remarkable. The first was a little, fat American Jew, who for political reasons had taken refuge in this country. His book on "Sales" will be known to law-students, and I am sure nobody else could have made such a dry subject so interesting. His knowledge of the law was, like Sam Weller's knowledge

of London, "extensive and peculiar," his reasoning powers exceedingly acute, and his subtlety often beyond the comprehension of the judges whom he addressed. I remember a relative of mine retaining him in a case in the Court of Appeal involving a very nice point in the law of conspiracy. It was a criminal case but, under what procedure I cannot now remember, it was tried in the Court of King's Bench. The defendants, of whom there were four, were found guilty of conspiracy but not guilty of any overt acts of conspiracy ; a curious verdict which Cockburn, before whom the case was tried, intimated was tantamount to an acquittal ; but he reserved the point for argument. Unfortunately he fell ill, and after considerable delay the case was argued *in banco* under the presidency of Mr. Justice Blackburn, a strong judge and sound lawyer, who held that conspiring to commit an unlawful act was in itself a criminal offence, even although nothing was done to give effect to it, and the unfortunate defendants were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment as first-class misdemeanants.

They appealed, and, as the case had been tried in the King's Bench, it went before the Court of Appeal instead of the Court for the Consideration of Crown Causes Reserved. Mr.

Charles Bowen (afterwards Lord Justice Bowen), was so interested in the point at issue that he volunteered to appear without fee for one of the defendants. The argument that Benjamin addressed to the Court was extraordinarily clever, and his reasoning most cogent and convincing. But there was one man on the Bench who was his equal in intellectual ability, whom he could not convince—or, perhaps it might be nearer the truth to say, would not be convinced—that was Lord Justice Mellish, a fragile-looking little man, but as keen as a razor. The duel between these two was a wonderful exhibition of forensic skill. The upshot of it was that the judgment of the King's Bench was upheld. I think, but am not sure, that the case went to the House of Lords ; if it did, the result was the same.

Although, of course, I am not qualified to express an opinion, I have always felt that Benjamin had the best of the argument and that the decision was wrong ; and I can say this with some confidence because Lord Justice Bowen, who was one of the most brilliant men who ever sat on the Bench, was emphatically of this opinion. The mere act of conspiracy is a matter which belongs to the sphere of morals rather than of law, and in deciding otherwise the law appears to have invaded the



region of intention which, in the absence of any overt act, is beyond its province. It is very alarming to think that if in the seclusion of my study I and a brother cleric conspired to murder some prominent member of the National Assembly of the Church, we should be guilty of a criminal offence, even although we said and did nothing to carry our intention into effect !

Montagu Williams, the great criminal counsel at that time, was a genius. He had been a soldier, an actor, a journalist, and I don't know what else, before he became a barrister. His knowledge of life was only equalled by his insight into human nature ; and he understood the peculiar psychology of the Old Bailey juryman to a nicety. There was something magnetic about his personality ; he had extraordinary eyes—black and piercing—and I believe at times he hypnotized the jury. When I say that he was a genius, I refer to his wonderful gift of utilizing every factor in a situation and turning it to account. It has been said that there is a way out of most difficulties, if you can only see it. However tight the corner in which a man found himself, Williams could see in a flash the way of escape, if there was one.

As an example of this, I recall a case in which he defended a man on a charge of perjury.



There was no question about the man's guilt. The perjury was committed in an affidavit, and although the details of the case were rather complicated—just sufficiently complicated to be a little puzzling to the ordinary jurymen—yet the evidence was conclusive. The chief witness was the solicitor who drew the affidavit and before whom it was sworn. I noticed that Williams, in cross-examining this witness, glided lightly over the details of the case and asked in a casual sort of way, "When this affidavit was sworn, how long did the transaction take?" "Oh, about five minutes," was the reply. "Oh, about five minutes!" commented Williams. There was nothing in the words themselves, but the way they were uttered made us all feel that the matter had been disgracefully hurried. It created the right atmosphere. The defence—that the man swore the affidavit without having it properly explained to him, and without clearly understanding what he was doing—developed this atmosphere until it pervaded the whole court. When, in his speech, Williams said, "We know what these solicitors are, gentlemen," everybody, except the members of the profession, seemed to be conscious of the fact that solicitors were a shady and unscrupulous lot and that the man in the dock was one of their victims.

Had counsel for the prosecution had the sense to counter this bluff with something of the same kind, he might have secured a conviction, but, instead of doing this, he made a long, involved, tiring speech, recapitulating all the facts of the case and making them more confusing than before. The judge followed with a lengthy summing-up, delivered in "a soft undercurrent of sound" to which the jury, who were obviously bored, paid very little attention. When he had finished, they returned a verdict of "Not Guilty," without leaving the box. Nobody was more surprised than the prisoner himself. There were three factors in the situation. First, the slight complication in the details of the case, which made it rather difficult to follow; secondly, the prejudice against solicitors; thirdly, the ineptitude of the judge and the prosecuting counsel. Williams utilized all three. He avoided the details and put before the jury something which they could easily grasp; he made skilful use of the popular dislike of lawyers; and calculated on his opponent and the judge making the very mistakes which they did, in fact, make—he probably knew his men. If ability to do this kind of thing, almost to perfection, is not genius it is very near it.

One of the most extraordinary things I heard in court was counsel conducting his own and

his opponent's case at the same time. How this happened was as follows. In a certain suit a leading Q.C. had been briefed, and opened the case in a speech of some length, after which the luncheon adjournment took place. When the court reassembled he did not put in an appearance and could not be found. The conduct of the case devolved upon a little, timid, incompetent junior who had never had a brief before. When he tried to examine the plaintiff he stammered and stuttered, and became so hopelessly confused that he could not frame an intelligible question; there he stood, shaking like an aspen-leaf, with the perspiration pouring down his face. At last counsel on the other side said, "Let me put the question for you." The wretched little man was too feeble to protest and the whole examination in chief was conducted by his opponent, who then proceeded to cross-examine the witness in the usual way, after which he submitted that there was no case to go to the jury, to which the judge agreed. The performer of this remarkable feat was Mr. W. Grantham (afterwards Mr. Justice Grantham), a very bright, breezy, humorous, capable man. He acted quite fairly in this matter; although I fancy the plaintiff would not have been so promptly nonsuited if his own counsel had been there to examine him.

The huge fees which counsel receive in these days were then unheard of. Ballantine received a fee of four figures (I forget the amount) for going to India to defend some Nabob who had got himself into trouble ; and this was spoken of as something quite extraordinary. In the appeal case referred to, the fee marked on Benjamin's brief was only £50, and the services of any leading Q.C. could be obtained for £100 or £150, with £10 or £15 a day refresher. Fifty years earlier, I imagine, they were lower still, for my readers will doubtless remember that the taxed costs of the plaintiff in *Bardell v. Pickwick* were only £133.6.4. Napier Higgins, whose practice was chiefly in chambers, was reputed to make anything from £10,000 to £15,000 a year. His handwriting was á curiosity, and it was very fortunate his clerk could read it, otherwise his written opinions would have been of no more value to ordinary people than a Chinese puzzle. Junior counsel, in those days, did not receive more than £25 at the highest, and usually went into court for about a quarter of that sum, and even for less.

Of the judges at that time Sir George Jessell, the Master of the Rolls, was considered by far the most able. He used to read through the pleadings and then appear to go to sleep, or perhaps, like Mr. Justice Stareleigh, he could

think better with his eyes shut. But he rarely made a wrong decision. And his judgments were short and very much to the point; they were seldom, if ever, reversed on appeal. The great Lord Selborne, who in certain circles was regarded not only as a distinguished lawyer but an eminent Christian, was once described by Jessell as a "Psalm-singing old 'umbug." Not a few people thought this, although they did not like to say it.

Hawkins (afterwards Lord Brampton), like some dignitaries of the Anglican Church, was thought a good deal more of by the general public than he was by his professional brethren. There was just a touch of the charlatan about him. He was rather a smart-looking old man, with aquiline features and an eye like a hawk. His voice was most agreeable and his manner could be very pleasant when he liked, and quite the reverse when he didn't like, and that was when anybody tried to humbug him. I remember, in a certain case, his riding roughshod over a witness in the most brutal fashion, bullying the poor wretch and treating him like dirt; while he treated the next witness, a man in the same rank of life and giving practically the same evidence, with the utmost courtesy. I heard afterwards that the first man was an unmitigated scoundrel, and the second a decent,



honest fellow. How Hawkins spotted the difference I can't imagine. He was supposed to have a wonderful knowledge of the underworld, and to be up to all the games of the criminal class, who stood rather in dread of him. One man, so the story goes, when asked to plead, looked up and saw Hawkins on the bench. "Hawkins, by Gawd!" he exclaimed, "I plead guilty."

Lord Chief Justice Cockburn was another remarkable man. He had one of the most beautiful voices I have ever heard and expressed himself in perfect English, so that listening to him, when he was summing up a case or delivering a judgment, was always a pleasure. His summing up in the celebrated Tichborne case was supposed to be quite a masterpiece, although it was much criticized by the supporters of the Claimant. And, as I suppose everybody knows, it was his extraordinarily clear and convincing statement of the facts, as prosecuting counsel in the Rugeley poisoning case, which secured the conviction of Palmer. Cockburn, like so many good advocates, was not much of a lawyer, and he remained an advocate even after he was on the Bench. He was one of those who, as I heard an Oxford divine delicately put it, "felt the restraints of monogamy," and it is reported that the landlord of a certain hotel at Cowes, which he



was in the habit of visiting, respectfully requested him, when a blonde Lady Cockburn was followed a fortnight after by a brunette, to try and get his wives as much alike as possible !

Next to Jessell I believe Lord Justice Bramwell was reputed to be the most able man on the Bench. He was an extraordinary character, with a very caustic tongue. I remember a counsel appearing before him who had an irritating trick of saying, "There is no earthly reason, my lord." "No, nor heavenly, either," snapped Bramwell, who could stand it no longer. On another occasion, when passing sentence, the prisoner broke in upon his remarks and said, "My lord, I have an irresistible impulse to commit crime." "And the law," responded Bramwell, "has an irresistible impulse to punish you. Take five years penal servitude."

Of solicitors I have not much to say. I often saw George Lewis, and always felt thankful that I never came under the scrutiny of his eyeglass as a hostile witness. A vast amount of curious information must have been buried with him, for he received more confidences than most confessors, and never put anything down in writing, his extraordinary memory rendering this unnecessary ; although, I believe, his chief reason was to preserve absolute secrecy in regard to matters entrusted to him.

## XIV

### CAMBRIDGE

**A**FTER my year in London, Cambridge seemed like going back to school. I have often doubted whether my friends were wise in sending me there. In the first place, my classics and mathematics were not good enough to admit of my reading for honours in either of these subjects with much prospect of success; and the law tripos was not worth troubling about. The University Law School at that time, whatever it may be now, was a very second-rate affair, and it was commonly said that the first thing a man had to do, when he began reading law seriously, was to forget everything he had learnt at Cambridge. In the second place, I was not capable of making up for my intellectual deficiencies by any marked proficiency in athletics, and so I felt myself to be, and I was, an outsider.

In spite of this, I found Cambridge a very pleasant place and enjoyed my residence there, although I am sure I should have been happier in every way as a student at one of the Inns of Court. To be quite happy at Cambridge a

man must be able *ex animo* to accept all its conventions. It is a place where men are cut to pattern. They are supplied with a ready-made stock of beliefs, principles and social customs ; if they accept these without question, as they are expected to do, they get along all right ; if they assert their independence they are ostracized. Standardized beliefs and customs are no doubt economical in a world in which, as Carlyle said, we are obliged to be up and doing and have no time to rectify our ready-reckoners. But to profit by them a man must be normally constituted, brought up in normal surroundings, and have passed stage by stage through the normal educational course of the class to which he belongs. Under these conditions the finished product is a useful social factor, efficient and quite reliable, even if not particularly interesting.

Cambridge, although it turned out hundreds and thousands of men all in the same mould, had its personalities ; that is to say, there were some larger specimens of the ordinary type. Among these I reckon Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort, who were very much to the front in my day, and were regarded with a kind of reverential awe by most residents in the University. From a certain set, indeed, these exalted beings received a blind homage, and

the slightest suggestion of criticism was regarded as a piece of presumptuous ignorance. I always thought that they were much overrated. Their admirers believed that they would rank with the immortals, but, after fifty years, they and their works have already passed into limbo. Who knows or cares anything about Hort to-day? He was very learned, but so critical of his own work (which really means so sensitive to the criticism of others) that he hardly published anything worth speaking of. I came across a volume of his sermons only the other day, and I could not help feeling, as I read them, how profoundly astonished the Apostles would be at some of the ideas he attributes to them, and still more at the minute and accurate knowledge of the Greek language he supposed they possessed, so that they were able to discern the finer shades of meaning of every noun, verb, preposition and particle they used, and to weigh and balance each word with the same meticulous care as Dr. Hort himself.

Westcott was a faded, waspish, ugly, common-looking little man. He had two sons at Pembroke, and used very often to come to our chapel on Sunday evenings, when I had the privilege of studying his physiognomy at close quarters, as I sat nearly opposite to him. His expression was distinctly disagreeable;

there must have been some sour Puritan strain in his blood, and I was not at all surprised to hear that when his books were in course of publication the printers at the University Press suffered a good deal from his fussy irascibility. He was a great scholar, quite distinguished in his own line, which was the collation of MSS.; but nearly all his theories in regard to the text and authorship of the books of the New Testament have been relegated to the dust-heap. The Revised Version, in which he had so large a hand, fell still-born on the world, choked by the pedantry of those who brought it forth. If it ever had any life, Burgon's slashing criticisms effectually destroyed it. I have heard it said by Westcott's admirers that he founded a new school of religious philosophy; if he did, it has almost disappeared; he is very rarely quoted or referred to by modern theological writers.

Liddon once said that the dense fog in London was due to Canon Westcott's having opened his study window at Westminster: but many people mistook Westcott's fogginess for profundity. In the domain of purely speculative thought he had hardly a single clear-cut idea in his head. It was the fashion to attend his lectures, which must have been dreary in the extreme, and quite over the heads

of most of those who listened to them. They gave him a fine opportunity for parading his learning, and, incidentally, his lack of commonsense, as he quoted all his authorities in the original and expected the ordinary undergraduate to be able to follow him. Some of my readers may be quite respectable scholars, but I will undertake to say that they could not translate a page of Origen (Westcott's favourite author) without getting stuck in the middle of it. Every one, I suppose, knows the story of Westcott's reply to the Salvation Army preacher, who asked him whether he was saved. "Do you mean *σέσωκα, σεσώσμαι, or ἐσώθην*?" responded Westcott. Nobody but an arrogant pedant would have given such an answer to an ignorant but, no doubt, well-meaning man. It shows the kind of person Westcott was.

Lightfoot was by far the most genial and human of the three. He was one of the ugliest men I have ever seen, and might have passed any day for a respectable pork-butcher. The lower part of his face was particularly coarse and heavy, and denoted strong animalism; this showed itself in his love of eating. I do not wish to suggest that he was a glutton, but he was a decidedly good trencherman, and his inability to carry out his doctor's orders



to abstain from the pleasures of the table no doubt shortened his days. He was a very kindly, humble-minded, simple and devout man; and, in his work, most conscientious and painstaking. One of his chaplains told me that he postponed the publication of a volume of his *Apostolic Fathers* in order that he might learn Sanscrit, as he felt he could not conscientiously give a quotation in that language without knowing it. It was nothing to Lightfoot to learn a language. I believe he was master of about eighteen. I fancy his *Apostolic Fathers* will take a permanent place among the standard works of Anglican theology, and I have been told that he has uttered the last word on certain controverted questions, such as the Ignatian Epistles.

Lightfoot, Westcott and Hort would have been more in their element in the Dissenting Ministry than in the Ministry of the Church of England.

It is refreshing to turn from these rather dingy divines to the handsome, courtly, dignified Dr. Thompson, Master of Trinity College. I can never think of Thompson without recalling Meredith's description of Dr. Middleton, who combined in himself "piety and epicurism, learning and gentlemanliness, with good room for each and a seat at one another's table."

He had the reputation of being the most sarcastic man in the University, if not in the country, and there is a verse in the Psalms which was felt to be particularly applicable to him—"Who is able to abide his frost?" I much regret that many of the good things told about him are rather ancient chestnuts; such, for instance, as his answer to the lady who asked him why he had not been made a bishop; but, even at the risk of being a bore, I cannot refrain from giving his reply to one of the tutors of Trinity whom he particularly disliked, who submitted to his inspection the MS. of a new edition of a Greek play he was about to publish. It was as follows: "Sir, I return your MS. *I have corrected some of the grosser errors!*"

Years ago, the late Archdeacon Maddison told me the following story which illustrates Thompson's ability to look after himself. He was travelling by rail in Italy during the time of the Austrian occupation, and leaving his seat to get some refreshment found it occupied on his return by a fat Austrian officer who refused to move. It was in vain that Thompson explained that the seat was his and that he had only vacated it temporarily; to all his representations the officer simply replied, "He who has the seat retains it." He suggested that Thompson should take the

inside seat, which happened to be vacant. "But," said Thompson, "I fear that I shall incommode you in getting to it, as there is scarcely room for me to pass." "Not at all, sir," replied the officer, stepping into the corridor and making a polite bow. Thompson promptly popped down in his old place, and all the officer could get out of him afterwards was, "He who has the seat retains it," the massive black eyebrows being elevated each time in well-feigned astonishment that anyone should wish to contradict his own principles.

It was men like Thompson, Latham, Master of Trinity Hall, and the Master of Magdalene, and some of the dons at King's, who saved the character of the University for manners and good breeding. Most of the dons were a sorry set of smugs. James I was, I believe, described as the most learned fool in Christendom, and there were plenty of men in Cambridge in my time to whom this description applied. I was not particularly fortunate in the tutor of my college, a short, fat, asthmatic little man, intended by nature for a retail tradesman, but who, through having some mathematical ability, reached a position which gave him abundant opportunity for exhibiting his defects of breeding. To do him justice, he was a good man of business and a very capable administrator,

and in his way a just man. He was also, within certain limits, exceedingly shrewd, though nobody could be taken in more easily by those who knew his weak side. There is an eminent specialist in Harley Street to-day—if he is not dead—whom I well remember meeting at one of the tutor's receptions, and whom I have always admired for the exceedingly adroit way in which he made his escape. As soon as the geological specimens, which always followed tea, were brought out, he looked at his watch and said, "Excuse me, sir, but I make a rule of always reading from 5 till 6.30. Might I come and inspect the specimens some other time?" The tutor was delighted. "You're the kind of man we want, Mr. T.," he said. "Yes, come any time you like." I think the good man would not have been quite so pleased had he known how this promising student spent the rest of the evening.

On the other hand, a pimply-pious young follower of Handly Carr Glynn Moule, who went to Newmarket on Two Thousand Day, to distribute tracts on the race-course, failing to return in time for Hall, which we were required to do on that occasion, was promptly sent down for the rest of the term, in spite of his excellent motives. Another man who applied for an *exeat* on Derby Day, to attend his aunt's

funeral, hurt the tutor very much indeed. "To think, Mr. J., you should have thought I was as simple as that!" he exclaimed, almost with tears in his voice.

In spite of his narrow-minded Puritanism, he did a good deal to raise the college to its present position in the University. He left the stamp of his smug respectability on it, but I believe that now it has shaken this off; and I was told the other day that it is one of the few colleges in Cambridge which attempt to train men for public life, instead of cramming them with knowledge without instructing them how to use it.

The new Statutes had only just come into force when I went up, and most of the dons held their fellowships for life. Some of them did work as lecturers and tutors, others seemed to do little else but eat, drink, and scramble for any piece of preferment that might be vacant—that is, of course, if it were worth having. There was in those days, and there may be now for all I know, plenty of good wine in the college cellars and plenty of classical scholars and other scholars capable of enjoying it. The best judge of port in the University was Ward, the vicar of St. Clement's. He grew so hugely corpulent in his latter days that he could not officiate in church and, as his curate was as thin as a lath and very cadaverous



looking, irreverent undergraduates used to call them "The Flesh and the Devil."

One night Cobb, the bursar of Trinity, asked Ward to dine with him in Hall. Ward refused all wine at dinner. "I take my whack afterwards," he explained. So after dinner, in the common room, a bottle of port was called for. "I want your candid opinion about this wine, Mr. Ward," said Cobb. Ward sniffed it, held his glass to the light, took a small sip, made a grimace and exclaimed, "Muck!" Cobb, who was the politest of men, expressed his regret and ordered a bottle of superior vintage. Ward went through the same performance as before, and then said, "This, I am afraid, is not much better, Mr. Cobb." Then Cobb ordered a bottle of the finest wine in the cellar. Ward sipped it, rolled it round his tongue, nodded his head, and ejaculated a satisfied "Ah!—this will do nicely, Mr. Cobb. And," he went on, "if you will pardon the liberty I am taking in making the suggestion, it would be well if this wine were not circulated; the men here are not up to its level. If I am not imposing on your hospitality, I might also suggest that another bottle be decanted and brought in, say, in an hour's time."

One of the curiosities of the University was Mayor, the Professor of Latin. He was an



ardent vegetarian, and I remember going to one of his breakfasts, which he gave from time to time in order to advertise his dietetic ideas in a practical form. What the unpalatable messes were that were served to us I cannot now remember, although I do remember that it was a bitterly cold morning and that there was nothing to drink but lemonade! I was very unwell after that repast.

A friend of mine once asked him to preach in aid of a fund for a new organ. Mayor arrived with a bag full of reports, pamphlets and other documents, and gave a long address on the Archbishop's Mission to the Assyrian Christians. It was an evening service, and he went on and on and on. An hour passed and he was still talking, or rather, to speak correctly, was still reading copious extracts from the literature with which he had provided himself. At nine o'clock one or two people slipped out; at a quarter past nine more followed; still Mayor went on. My friend thought it time to intervene, so he pulled the preacher's surplice and whispered, "Don't forget that the collection is for the organ fund." Then Mayor suddenly remembered where he was and what he was there for, and said, "Your good Vicar has just reminded me that the collection to-night is for the organ fund; I hope you will give

liberally, and I will reserve the rest of my remarks on the interesting subject which has occupied our attention for some future occasion." The congregation were so grateful for their escape that the collection was three times as large as was expected. Mayor had mixed up this preaching engagement with a Missionary Meeting which was to take place the following night in the Guildhall!

The late Archdeacon Cunningham—one of the kindest and best of men—told me that he asked Mayor to write a short biographical sketch of Todhunter, the mathematician, for a magazine of which he was either editor or in some way connected. Mayor agreed to do so. Unfortunately, among his other peculiarities, he had a theory that every fact in a man's life, however insignificant, was of importance and ought to be recorded. The result was that in five lengthy contributions he reached Todhunter's fourth year, and the editor, calculating that at this rate of progression it would take nearly half a century to complete the work, was compelled to bring it to an abrupt conclusion at this interesting point.

It was extraordinary how many men of this kind there were among the Cambridge dons at that time; prodigiously learned, but amazingly futile. There was one distinguished

mathematician of European reputation, who wrote treatises which only himself and about four other persons could understand, but who never could solve the problem of opening the swing doors leading into the reading-room at the Union. He used to stand gazing at them with the most helpless expression on his face, and would then feebly pick at them with his fingers until somebody who wasn't a mathematician came and pushed them open for him.

This kind of thing made me rather sceptical about the much vaunted advantages of a classical and mathematical training. I have come to the conclusion that proficiency in these branches of knowledge is no guarantee of any real ability, however much it may testify to a man's industry and powers of application. Given a good verbal memory (which is rarely found with strong reasoning powers), the kind of intelligence possessed by a skilled mechanic, and adequate instruction, anyone can reach a respectable level of classical scholarship, and the same is true of mathematics. It was possible to gain a first-class in the mathematical tripos chiefly on the book work, which is largely a matter of memory.

Mathematical genius is a weird and mysterious thing. I knew one man who used to read

Newton's *Principia*, or some other equally abstruse treatise, lounging in an armchair, with the book on the floor, turning over the leaves with a stick. In this easy fashion, his extraordinary brain absorbed things which it took ordinary mathematicians weeks of hard application to master. He used to get drunk regularly once a week, to clear his head out, so he said; and I was told that at the complimentary dinner given to him by his college, when he was senior wrangler, he disappeared under the table quite early in the proceedings.

On the other hand, many classical men found extreme difficulty in passing the mathematical part of the Little Go, especially the extra subjects—Statics, Trigonometry and higher Algebra—in which all had to pass before reading for honours. The intelligence with which the studies of the University were directed is illustrated by the fact that Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* was one of the subjects for the Little Go. With delightfully unconscious humour Logic has now been appointed as a substitute, but in my day there was no option. Most "pass men" found Paley quite beyond their comprehension, though why, I never could quite make out. All sorts of expedients were devised to cram it into their heads. There

were Paley verses which men learnt by heart, and which some of them quoted in answering the examination paper. One celebrated coach had a Paley pool on Sunday evenings. Each man put in sixpence or a shilling a round, and the pool was taken by the one who answered the most questions. If the coach put a question which no one could answer, he took the pool himself !

Cambridge is a melancholy place to visit after a lapse of thirty or forty years. The last time I was there was about ten years ago. I went to my college for a chat with the old porter and found that he was being buried that afternoon. I crossed the road and dropped into the billiard-rooms in Mill Lane for a chat with John Porter, the proprietor, who was quite a character in his way and well known to many generations of Pembroke and Peterhouse men, and found that he had been buried the previous week. Except the Master of my college, who was of my year, there was nobody left in town or University known to me in my youth. They were all dead and gone, so I thought the best thing I could do was to take the next train to London.

## THE UNITED STATES

**A**SIX weeks' holiday in the States is one of the pleasant memories connected with my stay in Bermuda.

New York was only forty-eight hours' run from the Island, and I looked forward to seeing it with not a little eagerness. In that part of the world it is looked upon as the hub of the Universe and I expected to be much impressed. My expectations were not disappointed: I was impressed. Not precisely, perhaps, in the way I thought I should be. My impressions are summed up in the description I mentally applied to the place after I had been in it a few hours. The City of Dreadful Racket. I should imagine that it is the noisiest city in the world; there may possibly be uglier places. Yet in some respects it is not unlike London.

If you eliminate from London everything that softens and mellows it, everything that the hand of Time has done to tone down its



harsher features and invest it with a certain dignity and refinement, you get New York. Walking along Wall Street you encounter the same kind of people you meet in the City, the offices and buildings (if you don't look at the sky-scrapers) are much the same in appearance, and there is the same atmosphere of hurry and bustle. "There is something in our climate," said an American to me, "that begets a fierce energy." So there is. Before I had been long in New York I found myself dashing about as if pursued by Furies. I rushed hither and thither, and among other places to the railway station. Very little of the "back of Europe," as New York is sometimes called, was sufficient to satisfy me, and as I wanted to see America (and when in this chapter I use that word I mean the United States), I made for Philadelphia as fast as the train could take me.

This was my first experience of a railway journey in the States. And, among other things, I was tremendously impressed by the haughtiness of the officials who condescended to supervise the arrangements. On my reverently asking one of them, who looked something between a Field Marshal and an Imperial Chancellor, "Is this the train for Philadelphia?" I was told to "git in" in

tones so contemptuous that I slunk away, feeling smaller than I ever did in my life.

The American railway system is in many respects (civility of officials excepted) superior to our own; especially in regard to arrangements about luggage. It was such a relief not to have to worry about it or to collect it when you arrived at your destination. I booked all mine (except a "grip," as the Americans call it) to my address in Philadelphia, and found it waiting me on my arrival there. The open corridor coaches have their advantages. They are a safeguard against the undesirable things that sometimes take place under our system; but, on the other hand, they expose you to annoyances of another kind which are nearly as bad. This I soon discovered, for when I had settled down to read, a loquacious American, with a nasal voice which was extraordinarily high-pitched and penetrating—it cut the air like a knife—kindly told me, and incidentally every one else in the compartment, the chief events in his family history, his financial projects, his wife's illness—with a minute description of the condition of her internal organs—and many other facts of an intimate and personal character connected with himself and those belonging to him. Oh the relief when he got out at Trenton! Confidences

of this kind, imparted to entire strangers during a railway journey are quite the rule in the States, and English people are considered very reserved and "stand-offish" because they do not adopt the same practice. My friend, on this occasion, punctuated his remarks by biting pieces off the end of a cigar, chewing them for a moment, and then spitting them out on the floor. He never attempted to light the cigar; just chewed, and spat it away. Whether it is the climate or not, or whether it is due to other conditions of their surroundings, Northern Americans grow very like the Red Indians who originally inhabited that part of the country. You see exactly the same type of physiognomy: the high cheek-bones, aquiline nose, prominent chin, hard mouth and keen eyes.

The Indians are better-mannered and more picturesque in appearance. Americans of the type who entertained me in the train have a genius for bad taste in dress; and I should imagine no great liking for soap and water. A negro attendant who would address me as "Doctor"—in this land of titles every clergyman is supposed to be a D.D.—came round at short intervals with the inevitable iced water, without which the ordinary American seems unable to live. He begins the day with it, takes it at all his meals, and at frequent intervals

between meals, and the last thing at night. It is a curious custom and is, I believe, largely responsible for the acute dyspepsia which is so common among Americans of all classes.

They are the most extraordinary people in the matter of their drinks. When I saw them ostentatiously drinking water with their meals, in the public dining-saloon (that's what I think it was called) of the hotel, I thought, of course, they were all total abstainers, and I half suspect that this was the impression they wished to convey to strangers. But I did not know my Americans. After dinner they would slip away, either to their own apartment or to some retired drinking-bar, and swig cocktails and other fancy drinks for hours at a time. I went into one of these bars just to see what it was like. A small, rotund Englishman, whose waist-measurement could not have been much less than sixty inches, ordered a big whisky-and-soda, which he took off at a single gulp. A long, lean American who had been watching him curiously, stroked him down the stomach and exclaimed, "Say, stranger, do you keep gold-fish in there?"

Cocktails—"swizzles" we used to call them in the West Indies—are pleasant but most deleterious; I am heartily sorry to hear that they have become fashionable among young

women in our own country. The cocktail habit has sent a good many people to perdition : they are, I am told, the most hurtful form in which intoxicants can be taken.

But enough, for the present, of drinks. Philadelphia, I found, was a delightful place. I was certain it would be, because New Yorkers disliked it so much. They said it was too quiet ; “ If a pin drops in Philadelphia every window in the place is thrown open to see what has happened,” they complained ; that kind of thing did not suit them. The newer part of Philadelphia ought to be lively enough for any normally-constituted person. The shops are excellent. The stores—Wannamaker’s, for example—are simply colossal. Anyone could spend a whole week exploring the different departments and then leave a good deal unseen. But the chief attractions of Philadelphia are the delightful Queen Anne and Georgian houses, and the beautiful streets in the older part of the city. Here you seem to be transported to the early days when Pennsylvania was a loyal colony, inhabited by good English families who lived in the same dignified style as they lived at home. Some of these families still survive—they have been in the State for eight or nine generations—and delightful people they are. Not in the least like the would-be typical



Americans. They live in retirement, taking no part in the political life of the country and very little part in its social life. But their hospitality is boundless. I was fortunate enough to have one or two letters of introduction, and everybody's house seemed to be open to me: I was passed on from one to the other, and most kindly, I might almost say lavishly, entertained. These people were thoroughly English in their tastes and sentiments. Although they were far too loyal to say anything against the land of their birth, yet I know they felt very much as we do in England about certain features of modern American life. I could not help thinking, when I was with them, that America to-day would be a much nicer place in every respect if the loyalists had held their own and the revolution had never taken place.

I am tempted to enlarge on this topic, but will content myself by stating—what cannot be denied—that the revolution was the triumph of the Puritan faction, which had been discontented and impatient of the control of the Mother Country since the time when America was first colonized. Puritanism, in spite of its religious pretensions, is essentially anarchical; that is to say, it is inspired by a venomous hatred of all authority except its



own. Those who know what American Puritanism was like at the end of the eighteenth century, and what a wholesale negation of national honour and social decency its ascendancy implied, will understand how it is that a country which, for the last hundred years, has been dominated by its spirit is marred by so much that violates the elementary laws of morality and good taste.

But to return to Philadelphia. Of course during a three weeks' visit I did not see much beyond the ordinary things that are shown to the passing stranger: the beautiful park which is, I believe, one of the largest in the world, the hospitals, the law-courts, and the home of Old Glory, where the American flag was first made, and the public buildings. These latter seemed to be undergoing a process of demolition and reconstruction. The explanation throws an interesting sidelight on municipal politics. It seems that the party in power had to provide work for its supporters, and this was how they did it. The law-courts are magnificent, worthy of a city which has a great legal reputation. I suppose every one knows that "a Philadelphia lawyer" is a proverbial expression for an exceptionally expert member of the profession. I was very interested by an incident which took place

in the Criminal Court when I visited it. Americans have a habit, due to their Puritan upbringing, of placing the most virtuous laws on their statute-books, bragging about them before the whole world, and entirely ignoring them in practice, with the connivance of the authorities, who can always be bribed when it is necessary. The Sunday Closing law was of this description. "No, sir-r," said a leading Philadelphian to me, with an air of conscious rectitude, "we allow no sale of intoxicants in this city on the Lord's Day."

As a matter of fact, there was probably no city in the States where there was more Sunday drinking and a larger sale of liquor. Everybody knew it, the police as well as other people. But it was necessary, for the sake of appearances, that now and again some one (probably somebody who couldn't or wouldn't bribe on the usual scale) should be sacrificed for the common good. One of these victims suffered on the occasion I am referring to. He was an old man, so crippled with rheumatism that he had to come into court on crutches, and was obviously "down-and-out" in every way. He had committed the heinous offence of supplying somebody with a glass of brandy on Sunday, and was called up for judgment. His counsel, in a short and very telling speech,

referred to his previous good character—this was the first offence of any kind charged against him—he had given up the business, so there was no likelihood of his repeating the offence ; he was practically ruined, and his health had completely broken down ; it was hoped that the court would deal mercifully with him. The court—represented by a thin-lipped, hatchet-faced judge—said that they were prepared to give the most favourable consideration to the plea for mercy (they will, I thought, bind the old fellow over and inflict a small fine) and sent the offender to the penitentiary for six weeks' hard labour ! Everybody in Court, when this sentence was pronounced, looked consciously virtuous and edified, although every one knew that the whole affair was nothing but a piece of savage hypocrisy.

This is a good example of Puritanism in the working ; but the recent prohibition law is a still more striking example. The worshippers of the Almighty Dollar, which is the only Deity the majority of Americans really believe in, are always finding ways of using the Puritan prejudices of their fellow-countrymen to fill their own pockets. Seeing that there was a good deal of money to be made by universal prohibition, they determined to introduce it.

Their methods were practical, business-like, and—to put it mildly—unscrupulous. By means of wholesale bribery, corruption and blackmail, backed by appeals to the ignorant and rabid fanaticism of total abstainers, who abound in the rural districts, they managed to carry their point. They knew, of course, that this preposterous law would make no practical difference in the habits of the people; that those who wanted intoxicants would get them the same as before, although at a greatly increased price. The legitimate trade in these things has been transferred to the “boot-leggers,” who are making such enormous profits that they are violently opposed to any proposal to amend or repeal the law. All this is perfectly well known.

In the meantime, the ordinary American, with a bottle of whisky concealed in the leg of his trousers, talks with a sanctimonious snuffle about the superior virtue of his country in making this heroic effort to put an end to the evil of drunkenness, and simple-minded people believe him. All the more violent temperance advocates are in the pay of the gang who control the illicit liquor traffic. This is the way in which Americans contrive to secure moral values and cash values at the same time. Whenever you hear an American

ardently advocating some moral reform, you have to ask yourself: "Now, what is he going to get out of it?" Usually, you will find, something very substantial.

They are, indeed, a curious people. Everything which we are taught to suppress in ourselves as bad form—bragging, boasting, lying, self-assertion, and the like—they indulge in to the top of their bent. They cannot restrain themselves and have no wish to; unless, of course, there is money to be made, when they can be as stolid as Red Indians. I went to a football match—at least, they call it football—between two of the smaller universities. It was simply a pandemonium. With their usual thoroughness, both sides organized their supporters in order to get from them the maximum amount of support and applause. They were drawn up in rival camps on opposite sides of the field. Each had its brass band, its megaphone, and its fogleman, whose duty it was to call upon his followers to shout, and yell, and whoop as the fortunes of the game required. When they wanted a rest, the band started playing some popular tune which the rival band tried its best to drown by playing another tune. When the match was finished there were scenes of the wildest excitement. The men shouted themselves



hoarse, the women tore off their hats and waved them frantically, and shrieked, and screamed, and embraced the men. Then they all went home, exhausted and satisfied, having given the fullest vent to the elemental feelings of their nature.

The other day, having an hour or two to wait in Exeter, I went with a friend to a cinema. My friend is a good type of English sportsman, quiet, unobtrusive and thoroughly decent in his tastes and instincts. We saw one of those beastly films, representing lower-class American life, which, because they are cheap, are now usually exhibited in this country—we couldn't stand it any longer than half an hour, and came out. My friend observed, "What a putrid lot of people." The words, of course, must be understood in a *Pickwickian* sense, although there are not a few Americans to whom they might be literally applied without any unfairness.

Ecclesiastical affairs in America should be a warning to those ardent democratic spirits among us who wish to place the Church under the control of the laity. They have done this in the States very effectually. Unless a clergyman has private means or holds one of the few endowed benefices which survived the revolution, he cannot call his soul his own.



As I explained in a previous chapter, the Church in every parish is under the control of the Church Vestry. This body, which is elected by pew-holders and subscribers, appoints the clergyman and pays his stipend. Membership of a Church Vestry is a hall-mark of respectability and is therefore eagerly sought by people on the make. The religion of these people produces much the same impression as a diamond ring on a dirty finger. They are egotistical, pompous and dictatorial; unless a clergyman defers to them in everything, they deprive him of his stipend and turn him adrift.

Everywhere I went I heard the same story of clergymen being driven from their benefices by overbearing and unscrupulous Vestrymen to whom they had happened to give offence. In one case the clergyman's wife was the offender, being better born and bred than the wife of one of the leading members of the Vestry. In another case, a prominent member of a Vestry derived a large part of his income from keeping brothels. His Rector ventured to remonstrate with him and was assailed with savage fury, and was eventually compelled to resign his benefice, with the approval, I regret to say, of the Bishop, who sided with the brothel-house keeper. It was a rare thing for a clergyman to remain in a benefice for

more than two years ; by that time, however meek and submissive he might be, the people usually began to get tired of him, and he had to move on.

Of course, the whole thing is a business transaction. With the American laity the ordinances of the Church are merely social functions. They want somebody to baptize their children, to solemnize their marriages, and to conduct their funerals, and they hire the clergy to perform these duties. And the clergy, with few exceptions, accept this view of the matter. As one of them said to me, "We give our people the doctrines that suit them, and the kind of service that suits them, and they give us the dollars in return."

I am writing of what I saw a quarter of a century ago ; things may have changed for the better since then. I hope they have, for American Episcopalianism was the most odious kind of worldly religionism it is possible to imagine.

One thing I noticed about Americans is that they are all absolutely sure of heaven. Just as a celebrated lady of title said, "God would never damn a person of my quality," so the ordinary American is certain that when he dies he will pass triumphantly to the realms of glory. This reminds me of a story, a

chestnut I am afraid, but it will bear repeating. An American died, and when his soul came to consciousness in the unseen world, he looked round and exclaimed, "Wal, I reckon that heaven is wonderfully like Chicago!" An attendant, who overheard the remark, said, "This isn't *heaven*!"

Most Americans seemed to hate us. I attribute it to, to use the jargon of modern psychology, the "inferiority complex." It is much the same kind of feeling that the newly-enriched, who are not quite sure of themselves, have towards gentlefolk. For a country which is everlastingly prating about equality, class distinctions are drawn with remarkable sharpness. And it was amusing to hear Americans, as I often did, indulge in wholesale abuse of our aristocracy, and then, almost in the same breath, brag about the lords they had met when in England. Apart from these peculiarities, they are on the whole a pleasant people; keen, intelligent, enterprising, interesting to talk to, and, whatever their feelings towards this country, disposed to be friendly and hospitable towards individual Englishmen. No doubt there are many earnest and high-minded men amongst them, but in a community which appears to have adopted Pragmatism (based on cash values) as its philosophic creed, these

do not have much chance of making their influence felt.

Economically, America appears to be strangling herself by her own short-sighted greed ; and sooner or later the colour question is likely to cause internal disruption, which may seriously retard, if it does not destroy, her somewhat " shoddy " civilization.

I visited Baltimore and Washington. The former is in some respects even more English than Philadelphia, and the latter is the most cosmopolitan city in the world. When it is mellowed it will be quite beautiful, but it seemed very garish twenty-five years ago.

I had an extraordinary shock when I was in Philadelphia, caused by my meeting in the flesh a man whom I had for a considerable number of years admired in the spirit. He was a clergyman, the Rector of one of the leading churches in the city, and was well known as the author of a good many theological books, some of which were useful and valuable, and all of which were widely read in England. He was an admirable summarist, and his book of *Meditations* suggested that he was spiritually-minded and devout. Some Sisters attached to his parish had come under my charge during their stay in Bermuda, where they had gone for a holiday, and after their return I

received a most kind letter from him, thanking me for my services and giving me a pressing invitation to go and see him if ever I should come to the States.

So when I was in Philadelphia I called upon him. Judging from the library, into which I was shown, this learned divine had a very good idea of making himself comfortable. I admired the sumptuous appointments: the Turkey carpet, the luxurious armchairs, the fine antique furniture, and the general air of snugness and cosiness. A little out of keeping, it struck me, with the spirit of some of his meditations, which seemed to enjoin a rather rigid asceticism, but then, of course, considerations of health might require a different kind of life in his own case. Well, I waited, wondering what he would be like. I expected to see a thin, dark, refined, ascetic-looking man of the type of Newman or Manning. Presently I heard sounds as if heavy articles were being bumped down the stairs—thud, thud, thud. I was wondering what it could be, when the door opened, and there rolled into the room a massive priest with a body like a hogshead and legs like beer-barrels, and a great, white, flabby, coarse face, like a full moon. I could hardly speak for astonishment. My dreams were shattered. Then I remembered

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that "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart"; that St. Paul was "an ugly little Jew," and that St. Thomas Aquinas was so stout that it was necessary to cut a large semicircle in the table to enable him to sit at it; and that even the renowned Father Dolling did not look as if he were much addicted to fasting, to say nothing of some of the Roman Catholic clergy I have seen in the North of England, and elsewhere, who, if they are as good as they are large, must be very pious men indeed.

After the usual greetings, the learned doctor began to talk. His conversation took the form of a series of questions, the answers to which indicated the different points in which his church was superior to all other churches in America, and, indeed, to all other churches in the Anglican communion. Did I know which church had the largest collections?

"No," I said, "but I suppose one of our West End churches in London."

"You are wrong," he replied. "Mine has." Then he rolled off astounding figures proving the point. When he went on to interrogate me as to which church had the most costly vestments and ornaments and an altar of solid silver and the rest of it, I, of course, answered that I had no doubt his church was



an easy first in all these respects. To which he answered, with a fat smile :

“ Yes, it is. My people appreciate my ministrations.”

That was the most astonishing thing about it. I was told that on Sunday mornings the approaches to the church were blocked with carriages, and there was not even standing room when the service began. Though what the attraction could have been is a mystery. They told me that when he was dressed up in his bejewelled vestments, he looked more like some old elephant decked out for a show than anything else, and that he was so constantly looking round to see who was there that he got hopelessly tangled up in the ceremonial, the function having to be suspended while somebody set him right. I believe his supporters were chiefly women, for whom his general repulsiveness must have had some kind of morbid fascination. They loaded him with gifts, among which was a huge pier-glass for him to admire himself in. The oily old humbug !

I was not in the least surprised when I heard a short time afterwards that he had been deprived of his benefice and unfrocked for gross immorality. I regret to say that this is by no means the only case of the kind I have

come across among ministers of religion. They are often men of emotional temperament, who are carried to great heights under the stress of spiritual excitement, and then when the inevitable reaction sets in fall down in the mud. Whether this particular person had any genuine religious feelings or not it is hard to say. His books, which I admired so much and in my innocence thought original, were for the most part simply translations and adaptations from the works of Roman Catholic writers.

I often think it would be an advantage to the Church if great preachers—or, perhaps, I ought to say, stirring preachers—and the writers of devotional books were kept in strict seclusion, as it so often happens when you meet them in the flesh all the good effect of their sermons and of their writings is entirely destroyed. “The laity should always remember,” says Aquinas, “that the clergy are men and not angels.” We are all of us subject to the weaknesses of humanity like other men, and each of us is inclined to some particular evil, to pride, avarice or sensuality, which are the three demons that beset the path of the priest. My readers no doubt know the story of the gentleman who was unexpectedly called upon to entertain a party of clergymen at dinner.

He knew very little about "the cloth" and consulted his butler on the subject. "'Igh or low, sir?" inquired the butler. "What does it matter what their views are?" asked his master. "It is like this, sir. If they're 'igh, I provides extra drink, if they're low, I provides more victuals."

It is said that Mr. Noel, of St. Barnabas, Oxford, asked the children one day when he was catechizing them: "Does God love Protestants, children?" To which they shouted out, "No, Father." "You are wrong, children," said Noel, "God loves Protestants, but He hates their *nasty ways*." This is what one feels about Americans: there are some lovable things about them, but many of their ways are horrid.

## XVI

### THE CONDITION OF THE CLERGY—SOME DEPUTATION EXPERIENCES—THE WAKEFORD CASE—CONCLUSION

**I**T was, I believe, the Duke of Wellington who said that "An army fights on its stomach." It is a pity that our Bishops seem quite unable to grasp this elementary truth. For while, with the best intentions, they are devising elaborate schemes of ecclesiastical organization, and debating questions of ceremonial (in which the majority of Church people are not in the least interested), and hastening hot-footed from congress to conference to discuss grandiose plans for the evangelization of the world, the rank and file of the clergy, the common soldiers of the Church Militant, are very nearly starving. It is impossible to suppose that their lordships are ignorant of this deplorable state of things, but, I fancy, they overlook it in the contemplation of the larger questions which occupy their attention.

They reckon that the sufferings of their clergy at the present time are not worthy to be

compared with the glory that shall be revealed, when the various schemes which the National Assembly has set on foot for the improvement of the Church shall come into operation. By that time it is not unlikely that not a few of the clergy will have passed through the Bankruptcy Court into the workhouse. I say "into the workhouse," because I heard that the latest proposal of the Assembly is to deprive aged and broken-down clergy who can no longer perform their duties, and have been too poor to make provision for their old age, of the pensions they might obtain under the Incumbents Resignation Act. This, I am glad to say, is not correct. But I hope I am not exaggerating when I say that the financial position of many, perhaps most, of the parochial clergy is almost desperate. Even those who have private means are feeling the pinch, while those who are dependent for their livelihood on their professional incomes are reduced to penury. The public are not aware of this because the clergy put a brave face upon the matter and suffer in silence.

I will not speak of the holders of many poor benefices of less than £300 a year—and how they live at all God only knows—but I will take the case of a man who has a living of that value. It is not a large income, but before

the War it was sufficient to provide the necessities of life, although it did not leave much margin for comforts and luxuries. This, perhaps, is as it should be. Moral theologians tell us that the Christian character is best formed in the state of "frugal poverty." I can see the truth of this, though I frankly confess that I detest poverty, frugal or otherwise, and like Sydney Smith I thank God for every additional penny to my income. But to return to the case under consideration. The increased cost of living has reduced his income by more than half; this means many privations and hardships which he has borne cheerfully, regarding them as part of the sacrifice required by the War, and knowing that many other people with small fixed incomes are in like case. He was deprived by the Government, on the advice of the Bishops, of any advantages that might have accrued to him from the increased value of the Tithe-Rent Charge, and acquiesced because he knew that tithe-payers as a body were hard hit.

His income from this source will be reduced by nearly fifteen per cent. when the new Tithe Act comes into operation, and any benefit he may have gained by the Act of 1918, which relieved him of the rates on his tithe, has been counterbalanced by the increased rates he has had to pay on his house. When the Act



comes into operation he will have to pay on both. In addition to this, the new Dilapidations Act will compel him to put his house in repair, and he will have to borrow money from Queen Anne's Bounty on the security of a yearly charge on his benefice in order to do it; there will be a further charge to provide for future upkeep. And now, on the top of all this, it is proposed to add yet another charge for a compulsory pension scheme. Am I wrong in saying that his position is desperate? Is he to blame if he feels that he has been badly let down by his fathers in God, upon whom he relied to look after his interests?

The clergy are in a helpless position. They cannot fight their own battles, for the simple reason that they are debarred by their very profession from using the weapons that other people use to protect themselves. The bishops have practically handed over the management of Church affairs to the National Assembly, under the mistaken idea that it is a really representative body. It is nothing of the kind. It was foisted on the Church by a small clique of faddists and busybodies, at a time when the minds of most Church people were preoccupied with other matters; the electoral roll was signed only by an insignificant minority, and even after four years most

Church people will have nothing to do with it. The House of Clergy is composed for the most part of comfortably placed ecclesiastics who have private means or have married rich wives. As they impose one burden after another on their poorer brethren, they unctuously admit that there will "no doubt be cases of hardship." No doubt there will be, but these sleek and prosperous gentlemen will not be called upon to suffer, and from their point of view, I suppose, that is all that matters.

The House of Laymen is even more unsatisfactory. I have always disliked what is known as the "ecclesiastical layman," because he is, as a rule, a cold prig of the Pitt Crawley type, and the National Assembly contains some particularly bad specimens of him. For the rest, a good many of the members belong to the class described by Newman as "half-pay officers—perhaps "retired lawyers" would be more correct—with time on their hands, country gentlemen with nothing particular to do," who, to adopt his language, having dipped into a pamphlet or two and read a few magazine articles, feel themselves quite competent to manage the affairs of the Church and to teach the clergy their own religion. These, assisted by a small army of Mrs. Proudies and Mrs. Jellabys, who are having the time of their

lives, are the Gods who are to lead the Church of England into the Promised Land. That a great historic Church, having its own laws and traditions and its own system of government derived from Apostolic times, should have been sacrificed to satisfy the ideals of modern democracy is a matter for profound grief, even to an unclerical person like myself. The practical result is the commercialization of religion; just as art, literature, music, the drama and sport have been commercialized. The Church is now administered by a central body, entirely out of touch with Her actual life, just as if She were a joint stock company or a big mercantile enterprise: the only work that is regarded as valuable is that which can be tabulated and advertised in *The Ecclesiastical Year Book*, and reduced to cash values.

I often hear it said that gold is the most acceptable gift which, in these days, anyone can bring into the Anglican Sanctuary. The young man who has great possessions, or even moderate means, who offers himself for Holy Orders is taken at once to the Episcopal heart. And so far from going away sorrowful, like the young man in the gospels, he goes on his way rejoicing, knowing that he has the keys of the kingdom of heaven and that in due time he will be crowned with glory and honour!

The bishops, it must be admitted, are in a very difficult position in regard to their patronage. Most of the livings in their gift, owing to the smallness of the incomes and the size of the houses, can only be held by men with private means, and, in some cases, by men who, if not exactly wealthy, are at least fairly well-to-do. But there is a very simple way by which this state of things might be altered, and which would make the position easier for both patrons and clergy.

Probably seventy per cent. of the parsonages in the country are far too large for the income of the benefices to which they belong. These big houses, with their gardens and extensive grounds, belong to an order of things that has passed away and is never likely to return. If, instead of loading their impoverished clergy with heavy charges for the upkeep of these houses, the bishops had had the wisdom to initiate legislation to facilitate the sale of them, they would have done some practical good. As it is now, it is very difficult for a clergyman to sell his parsonage. He has, first of all, to obtain the consent of the Bishop, the Archbishop and the Patron. Then he has to find a purchaser; and then, coincidentally, another house in the parish which he can purchase as a residence, or, failing this, a place to live in

until a new house is built. Even if he can make these arrangements, they may be upset at the last moment by the red tape and officialism of Queen Anne's Bounty, and he may have heavy fees to pay to surveyors and other officials with nothing whatever accomplished. No wonder he regards the matter as hopeless.

It is obvious that any scheme for the sale of parsonages would need financing, but the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who, at the present time have large surplus funds from the falling-in of ground rents, are in a position to finance it. And as a business proposition it would be perfectly sound. There is a market for these houses ; they would suit retired officers, or retired business men ; or country gentlemen no longer able to live in their ancestral homes. After paying for the purchase or erection of smaller houses there would, probably, be a large surplus available either for the increase of endowments or for a fund to provide for future upkeep.

The only reason, as far as I can ascertain, why a scheme of this kind has not been set on foot is that ample house accommodation must be provided to meet the case of clergymen with large families ! I will not trust myself to make any comment on this objection. It shows the kind of thing we are up against and the peculiar mentality of those who manage our affairs.



The poverty that has fallen like a blight on clerical homes is almost a national disaster. It may seem presumptuous to say this, but I believe it is true. In the past these homes produced men and women who did splendid work for their country. They were in many respects the ideal English homes. In them you found modest comfort combined with good breeding, culture and refinement, and a charming family life. Many years ago I did some deputation work, in the course of which I was the guest in about a hundred parsonages, in different parts of the country. I look back on those visits as among the most pleasant experiences of my life. I found my brother clergy kindly, genial and hospitable. They made no parade of their religion, but I am sure did good work in a quiet, unobtrusive way. Some of the results of that work were seen on the outbreak of the War; it is significant that about eighty per cent. of those who responded to Lord Kitchener's appeal were members of the Church of England. They may not have known much about Her doctrines, but they had grasped the fact that She puts duty in the forefront of Her teaching, and had seen it exemplified in the lives of Her clergy.

Of course, I had some experiences which were anything but pleasant. I remember a



visit to a remote country parish in East Anglia, ten miles from anywhere. The Rectory was a mile and a half from the village, and I arrived there on a drenching November night. I walked through the pouring rain to the School-room, and talked for an hour to half a dozen old women and a few children. When I got back to the Rectory, tired and wet through, the Rector's son exclaimed with great gusto, "Now, I am sure you would like a bottle of ginger-beer!" Not, mark you, the old-fashioned "ginger-pop," but the aerated abomination flavoured with ginger which is often sold as a substitute. I was more than thankful that I had a flask of whisky in my portmanteau, from which I was able to refresh myself and avert a bad chill. My readers may be curious to know the kind of person who offers a man ginger-beer when he is tired out and wet through. Well, he was a "pimplly pious" youth of unsavoury appearance and unsatisfactory character. His father, who was nearly eighty, had made several attempts to resign the living and had twice or three times actually signed a deed of resignation. But each time this hopeful son, who acted as his curate, had chucked it in the fire. He was practically Vicar of the parish, and had no intention of relinquishing that agreeable position

and taking a curacy elsewhere. The whole entertainment was on the ginger-beer scale, or perhaps a little below it. The house was the dirtiest I ever stayed in, and the sheets on my bed were so damp and grimy that I slept in my ulster coat in an armchair.

Talking about damp beds reminds me of another experience I had at a place in Yorkshire. My hosts were delightful people: children of this world, perhaps, but more agreeable in many ways than some of the children of light with whom I have sojourned during my earthly pilgrimage. I think they had forgotten to advertise the meeting, at any rate nobody turned up, so we adjourned to the Rectory to play bridge. I retired soon after midnight, and when I got into bed I could not understand why I felt so cold and chilly. After about a quarter of an hour it occurred to me that the sheets might be damp, so I pulled them off and held them to the fire. In a few moments I could hardly see across the room for steam; they were absolutely soaking; and I literally wrung the water out of the blanket which was underneath them on the bed. It took me nearly three hours to dry my bedding. It seems I had been given the bedroom of one of the sons, which had not been occupied since he went up to Cambridge

some six weeks before my visit. The maid had been told to air the bed and had considered it sufficient to put in a hot-water bottle an hour or two before I retired to rest ! Country maids need a lot of looking after. It was a lucky thing that there was a good fire, or I might have suffered for the rest of my days, or they might have been cut short. Not so long ago, a friend of mine, quite a young man, met his death through sleeping in a damp bed in a mouldy old Vicarage.

After this experience I saw the wisdom of the precautions taken by a clergyman I knew, who, whenever he went out to preach and had to stay the night, took his bedding with him in two large trunks. He lived to the age of ninety-three, married four wives, each of whom had money, and died much respected. Some clergywomen are too awful for words, especially those who have been born and bred to the business in a clerical family of the ultra-professional type. They take to clothing clubs and parish teas like a duck does to water ; they rule everybody, including their husbands, with a rod of iron ; their virtue is so austere that it freezes you ; and their sense of their social importance is as marked as their effusive piety. In the days of my youth they usually wore elastic-side boots, white stockings and

grey or drab-coloured gowns, very badly made ; the household keys were attached to their persons and jangled as they walked about ; they talked nothing but “shop” in public and discussed the unsavoury details of village immorality in private. Females of this kind look upon “a deputation” as an inferior person, and treat him accordingly. One of them regaled me with a supper of boiled sausages and cocoa, and gave me a bed which was made up of the top of a child’s crib for the head, a wooden box for the centre, and a chair for the end. I had an awful nightmare after that abominable supper, and tossed about so that I upset the whole erection and came down with a crash on the floor, much to the alarm of the household.

Another place I went to was that of a man who was a strict and severe Evangelical. I arrived there at about six o’clock in the evening, after travelling nearly all day on cross-country lines—and everybody knows the misery of long waits at small country junctions and creeping along in milk-trains—feeling dead-beat. He greeted me by saying :

“We are just going to have Evensong, and you will, of course, join us.”

I was really too tired to refuse. An infant in arms could have ordered me about. So

we had Evensong, which, as he "preached" the prayers in a very slow and deliberate manner, was rather a lengthy function. "Now comes dinner and rest," thought I to myself, but not a bit of it. He came prancing down the church to where I was sitting, and said :

"We usually hold a prayer-meeting in church after service ; you will, of course, take part in it."

I had no spirit left in me ! I know what I felt inclined to say, but not being a layman I couldn't say it. So we had the prayer-meeting, which lasted nearly half an hour. After that we made for the Vicarage. Now, I thought, we shall get down to the material things of life. I was becoming painfully conscious that I had a body as well as a soul. But (would you believe it ?) he immediately started another prayer-meeting in his study ; this was for the benefit of the newly "converted." I will express no opinion about the newly "converted," but I kneeled on the hard floor while three of them recounted their virtues to the Almighty and their fellow-converts, and when the fourth began I could stand it no longer, and got up and walked out. Presently my host, looking none too amiable, came into the dining-room, where I had retreated, and said :



“It has just occurred to me that you may possibly be in need of some refreshment.”

I pleaded guilty to feeling rather hungry, having had nothing to eat for nearly eight hours.

“Refreshment shall be sent to you,” he said.

I could have done with a steak or a chop and a bottle of Bass ; but after a twenty minutes’ interval, he brought three slabs of brown bread and butter and a cup of cocoa—prison fare ! I then set my brains to work to find an excuse for transferring my quarters elsewhere. So I asked whether I might smoke.

“I am sorry,” he said, “but it is a rule of this house that no smoking is allowed.”

I said, in that case, as I had no wish to break his rules, I would go to the local hotel. And then, to my intense disgust, he climbed down and said :

“Oh, I wouldn’t wish you to do that. You may smoke wherever you like.”

So I fumigated him thoroughly, and I hope he liked it. Before retiring, he said :

“I hope you won’t mind making your bed and doing your room to-morrow. My house-keeper, who is a converted woman, has conscientious objections to working on Sunday.”

I believe she had conscientious objections to working at any time. She was a fat, oily, dirty-looking female, who slopped about the



house singing revival hymns and neglecting her duties. I made my bed as best I could, consumed his cold viands, and left by the earliest train on the Monday morning. The man was, of course, really half cracked, and I do not wish to hold him up as a typical example of an Evangelical clergyman. He had plenty of money, which his interesting converts did their best to relieve him of. He paid his unfortunate curate, a married man with three children, £100 a year; that, he said, was amply sufficient for any clergyman who was really converted! I have met others of his kind, and, with the exception of some Socialists I have come across, they seem to me to be about the most selfish people on earth.

Minor ecclesiastical dignitaries—I mean prebendaries and honorary canons—either attain their positions by honest work or by the judicious use of the mammon of unrighteousness. One dear soul near here was made a prebendary after a quarter of a century's self-sacrificing labour, and we all rejoiced at this recognition of his long and faithful ministry. God forbid that I should say a word against men like this; but there are others of quite a different kind, with one of whom I once had the pleasure—for, as you will see, it *was* a pleasure to one who

appreciates the good things of this life as much as I do—of staying. He was always referred to as “the Canon” by the members of his household and his parishioners: a canonical atmosphere pervaded his capacious Rectory; I remember there was only one picture in his huge dining-room, that was a very impressive oil painting of himself in his canonical robes. He was slightly sanctimonious, but at the same time not lacking in worldly wisdom: “The children of light know a thing or two,” as the Yankee preacher said. He was a bachelor when appointed to his living, and almost the first thing he did was to publicly announce in church that he wished it to be clearly understood that he had no intention whatever of entering the marriage state. This was an exceedingly clever move, as it put every unmarried woman in the district on her mettle. After a becoming interval he succumbed to the attractions of a lady who had £5000 a year!

A clergyman with that income, if moderate in his views, generous in his subscriptions to diocesan funds and societies, assiduous in his attendance at meetings and committees, and if he knows how to work the weak side of his bishop, is bound to go far in the Church of England, and in due course this estimable

person was advanced to the ranks of the higher clergy. His manner, I must confess, was like the manner of some Eton men, just a little patronizing; but that was quite atoned for by his hospitality, which left nothing to be desired. His cook knew her business; his wines were known vintages of the finest quality, his cigars the best leaf that Havana can produce. I don't think anybody could have given him many points about the material things of life: he certainly "knew a thing or two."

After an exceptionally good dinner he kept me up to two o'clock in the morning explaining why he had refused various colonial bishoprics and other appointments. It was an easy session so far as I was concerned, as the conversation was more or less a monologue. All I had to do was to throw in an occasional "Quite so," "You could hardly do otherwise," "I see your point," "I am sure you acted from the highest motives," and so on. So I sat in a comfortable armchair and smoked his corona coronas and drank his excellent whisky (I have never tasted better), until he talked himself out. I think he thoroughly enjoyed himself.

Poor fellow, he did not live to realize his ambitions, for soon after my visit he met with an accident which resulted in his death

at the early age of forty-five. Had he lived he might have reached the episcopal bench. He would have made a good bishop. He was profoundly ignorant of theology and canon law, and had no moral courage; but, on the other hand, he had an official mind and a conventional outlook; he was an excellent organizer and a good administrator, he had a mellifluous voice, an easy flow of language, a fine leg for a gaiter and red hair like Judas Iscariot.

The outside work which I do to get rid of the moss which grows on one in these lonely country parishes brings me into contact with all sorts and conditions of laymen. They talk very freely to me at times about the clergy and about Church affairs in general. They seem very well disposed towards the ordinary parochial clergyman, but have no great love for cathedral dignitaries. They seem to think that some of these exalted personages reproduce many of the traits of Annas and Caiaphas; that they quarrel among themselves, and will stick at nothing to ruin anybody who makes himself objectionable to them. Doubtless, this is all imagination on the part of my lay friends. But I must candidly confess that a two years' residence in a cathedral city makes me inclined to think that the sinister rumours, which some-

times reach my ears, of internecine strife in cathedral chapters may not be entirely devoid of foundation, and that some members of these bodies are capable of falsehood and treachery and will stick at nothing to destroy any particular individual who is a thorn in their side.

The Wakeford case, for example, has a very ugly look about it. It is extraordinary how many laymen firmly believe that Wakeford was the victim of a malignant conspiracy hatched by a clerical county magnate, who bore anything but a good character, assisted by cathedral dignitaries who, if they did not actually participate in the plot, secured its success by disseminating poisonous slanders. And really, when one comes to examine the case impartially, there are not wanting grounds for this belief. I wish to call attention to certain facts which the public do not know, but which in the interests of justice they ought to know. By way of introduction, may I point out that there is not a single strand in the rope which was so skilfully woven to hang Wakeford which is not more or less rotten. The witnesses for the prosecution contradict themselves and contradict one another, not only in unimportant details, about which there might be mistaken impressions, but on material points. The very things they rely upon in



support of the truth of their story will be found on investigation to be either mistakes or inventions. On many important points they are flatly contradicted by Mr. Wakeford's witnesses, who, for the most part, belonged to a better class, were entirely disinterested, equally clear in their recollections, and quite as worthy of credence. The question at issue was which set of witnesses was speaking the truth, and the documentary evidence—the hotel books and register—supplied the crucial test. If these documents disclosed a true record of the facts, then Wakeford was unquestionably guilty; if, on the other hand, they had been tampered with, or faked, then undoubtedly he had been the victim of a dastardly plot.

I would observe, in passing, that lawyers, steeped in the traditions of the Divorce Court, in which documentary evidence of this kind is accepted without question as conclusive, are reluctant to admit that such evidence can possibly be fabricated. Take first of all the hotel accounts. It does not appear to have been disclosed at either trial that the regular book-keeper was, at the time of Wakeford's visits, relieved of her duties and that Pugh had installed himself in her place. He had everything in his hands and there was nobody



to check his operations. Very little ingenuity was required to "cook" the accounts. By transferring certain items from other accounts to Mr. Wakeford's, it could be done without showing any discrepancy in the total figures. And this, it appears, was actually done. The counterfoils of the receipt-book show that Mr. Wakeford, on his first visit, paid £4.1.6. He says his bill was £2, which was what he paid. It has now been discovered that £2.1.6 was charged to his account, of which 16/6 should have been charged to the account of a visitor named Blunden, and 25/- to the account of a visitor named Farrow. These payments were made by the visitors named, but are not set down to them in the account-books. This destroys the evidence from the hotel books and confirms Mr. Wakeford's story.

Unfortunately, these facts did not come to light until after the trial. In dealing with this part of the case the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council displayed a most extraordinary mixture of credulity and scepticism. That an Archdeacon, wearing his distinctive clerical attire, should carry on a *liaison* in a city where he was well known, and where he was certain to meet some of his acquaintances, appeared to Lord Birkenhead and his fellow-judges to be quite a tenable proposition; but that a

Welsh hotel manager, of dubious antecedents, might have tampered with the books was a proposition they could not possibly bring themselves to entertain !

We now come to the hotel register. The first entry has the words "and wife" written in lead-pencil after Mr. Wakeford's signature. Pugh admits that he wrote them, but was quite unable to say when he wrote them. This evidence, on the face of it, is worth nothing at all. It has the appearance of a clumsy attempt to bolster up a plot afterwards set on foot, and Pugh's explanation of the matter is certainly very unsatisfactory. It is the entry relating to the second visit which appears to be absolutely conclusive of Wakeford's guilt. There are the words "and wife" apparently in Wakeford's own handwriting, and, squeezed in between his name and the next entry, is written "M. Wakeford M" in a female hand. This entry their lordships say is the "crucial test." But their method of applying a crucial test is one of the most amazing features of the whole case. It is not until they have virtually decided against Mr. Wakeford that they deal with this piece of evidence, and then they find themselves caught in a vicious circle. "The only alternative," they say, "to the genuineness of the writing is the supposition that it

was a carefully planned forgery of the appellant's name" (this is inaccurate, as only the words "and wife" are in dispute) "as an integral part of an alleged conspiracy.

For the reasons already given their lordships feel that the hypothesis of such a conspiracy is untenable." "Crucial test," indeed! Their lordships beg the very question the test is to decide. If the words "and wife" were forged, it proved a conspiracy. "But," say their lordships, "there could not have been a conspiracy, therefore the words could not have been forged." But the additions to Mr. Wakeford's name, viz. "and wife" are a palpable forgery, and evidence of it was staring their lordships in the face, but they could not or would not see it, so obsessed were they with the preconceived idea that a conspiracy was impossible.

It is perfectly clear to anyone examining the register that the additions to Mr. Wakeford's name have all been smeared, and all with the same movement of a piece of blotting-paper; but the words "J. Wakeford, Precincts, Lincoln" are not smeared at all. The inference is irresistible: *these additions were clearly made by some one else after the Archdeacon had signed his name.* It was most unfortunate that no expert witness was called on behalf of Mr. Wakeford. This was due to a chapter of

accidents which I cannot enter into now. But since the trial the register has been examined by Mr. F. Compton Price, one of the most distinguished experts in handwriting in the kingdom, if not in Europe. During the last forty years Mr. Price has given evidence in innumerable civil and criminal cases, he is constantly consulted by Crown solicitors, and he has produced facsimiles of ancient and modern MSS. for the Trustees of the British Museum. No more competent witness could be put in the box, or one whose reputation stands higher. He has no conceivable motive for stating anything but what he honestly believes to be the truth, and, unlike my Lords of the Privy Council, he is not embarrassed by any preconceived opinion. Now, what is his verdict? He writes thus:

“The aforesaid Visitors’ Book has been examined by me, and I have now before me a photograph of the entry (actual size), and also an enlargement thereof.

“I have submitted the aforesaid entry to close scrutiny, and have carefully compared it with the admitted handwriting of Archdeacon Wakeford, thereby coming to the conclusion that whosoever wrote the questioned portion of the entry (and wife), it is not, in my opinion, the work of the Archdeacon.”

Mr. Price then goes on to give his reasons in detail, which are too lengthy to be set forth here. Among other things, he points out that "the enlarged photograph of the entry shows that the pen has been lifted from the paper more than once in the construction of the word 'wife,' and the line of writing carefully rejoined." And he concludes as follows: "I would say that the questioned part of the entry in the Visitors' Book is, in my opinion, a fraudulent addition with some attempt at simulation of the Archdeacon's handwriting."

I cannot help feeling that their lordships might have been less positive that there had not been a conspiracy if they had not overlooked the clue supplied by the police evidence in the case. What happened? Before Mr. Wakeford had been in Peterborough twenty-four hours, the police were making inquiries of Canon Morse and others about a clergyman who was staying at the "Bull" with a woman. The reason they gave for making these inquiries, to quote the words of the Lord Chancellor, "was in part untrue and in part misleading." It does not seem to have struck his lordship and the other members of the court that people do not as a rule tell lies unless they have something to conceal. The conduct of the police in giving these lying explanations was, says



the judgment, "a disquieting circumstance." Certainly it was. It admits at least of one explanation, and that is that they were taking part in a transaction that would not bear the light, and preparing the ground for a false charge against Mr. Wakeford at some future date. All the admitted facts of the case are consistent with this explanation.

The inquiries which, it is allowed, were not *bona fide*, show the plot in the making. When I add that the officer who arranged this police evidence and who was in close touch with Wakeford's bitterest enemy (who acted as prosecutor in the first suit), has since been dismissed from the force, for immorality when on duty and for keeping a gaming-house, the presumption in favour of this explanation is considerably strengthened. Evidence can also be produced that, at that time, Mr. Wakeford was being closely watched, and that the "accidental" discovery of the affair three months later, which so strongly impressed the minds of their lordships, is considerably discounted by certain facts which put an entirely different complexion on the matter. I will not go so far as to say that these facts and other things that have come to light establish Mr. Wakeford's innocence, for they have not been properly investigated, but I



venture to assert that they supply sufficient grounds for further inquiry, and it will be a lasting disgrace to British justice if it is refused.

I fear it will be refused, as too many people in high positions in Church and State are interested in hushing the matter up. But that the case has created an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust there can be no question, and the Authorities would be wise if they took steps to dispel it.

Now, I must bring these random recollections to a close. A friend to whom I read some chapters of this book very properly remarked :

“ Who are you that you should suppose that the public would care a row of pins about your reminiscences ? ”

I entirely agree with him. I am fully aware of my insignificance. So far I have done nothing which can be of much interest to anybody outside the very small circle of my friends and acquaintances ; I have not by being a figure in a *cause célèbre* obtained the notoriety which is necessary in these days to secure a wide circle of readers. Perhaps if I threw a brickbat at a Dean, or some prominent member of the National Assembly, it would materially assist the sale of this book. I am thinking about it, but I am afraid I have not got the nerve. In a very few weeks, if I live,

I shall complete my sixty-fifth year, and I suppose it will not be very long before a somewhat chequered and unsatisfactory career comes to an end. When you have passed the grand climacteric you are disillusioned about most things in this life and you have outlived all, or nearly all, your dreams and ambitions. Perhaps I might have done better in wig and gown than I have in cassock and bands, and I may have made the great mistake of my life when I deserted my first love. But there *is* a side of my nature to which the cassock and bands appeal, although anyone who has read these pages may find it rather difficult to believe it.

I hope nobody will think that I am guilty of any pretence or humbug, when I say that I sincerely love my North Devon parishioners. Whether they return the feeling or not I do not know; they have been very lenient to my shortcomings and failings, and although we have occasional differences we get along quite happily together. If I have any wish remaining, it is that I may be able to serve them as long as I have strength to do it; that is, of course, if the National Assembly leaves me enough to buy a crust of bread to support life.



